

A Look at NBA Expansion

BOSTON CELTICS PRIDE

Volume 2, Issue 14
May 11, 1987



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Larry Bird

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the Challenge**

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BOSTON CELTICS PRIDE

Celtics Challenge Winners Honored at the Garden April 3rd



G.M. Jan Volk presents banners to representatives of Barnstable and Washington Irving Middle Schools.

This season, the Boston Celtics have been pleased to join with the Governor's Alliance Against Drugs and The Bank of Boston in sponsoring the "Celtics Challenge" to stand tall against drugs.

This competition was designed to encourage junior and senior high schools across the state to implement anti-drug education programs, to get young people talking with their parents about drug and alcohol abuse, and to have every student in the participating schools sign pledges not to use drugs and alcohol.

During the past four months, more than 100 schools participated in the Celtics Challenge. On Friday, April 3rd, some of them were rewarded for their efforts with tickets to the Celtics game against the Detroit Pistons. They represented the five winning schools that had 100% participation and a perfect score in the competition. These students and their school advisors represent the very best of Massachusetts schools. These students represent young people who know how and why to say "no" to drugs.

The Celtics proudly dedicated that game to the winning schools. Jan Volk, Celtics' General Manager, and Tom Cullen, Director of the Governor's Alliance Against Drugs presented championship banners and a signed basketball to:

- The Washington Irving Middle School in Roslindale
- Chenery (chenree) Middle School in Belmont
- Gibbs Junior High School in Arlington
- Barnstable Middle School in Hyannis
- Chatham Junior/Senior High School

The Celtics wish to extend their sincere congratulations to the championship schools. Each school will be visited by Governor Dukakis and Celtics players and will receive a \$5,000 grant from the Governor's Alliance Against Drugs. The future promises championship seasons for them and their classmates.

The Celtics, the Governor's Alliance and The Bank of Boston want to thank all of the 105 participating schools who enthusiastically showed how they could stand tall against drugs.

Fourth In Kodak Poster Series In This Issue!

The Kodak/Celtics Pride pull-out poster series continues in this issue. We at Celtics Pride and all the good people at Kodak hope you enjoy this special feature. Poster Photography by Steve Cadrian.

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MAY 11, 1987

Cover...

Larry Bird's taking aim at more than a free throw now; he's got the '86-'87 title in full view and is more than ready to take his best shot. Cover photography by Andrew D. Bernstein.

Features...

4... NBA Expansion Possibilities

With the NBA approaching another exciting and successful season, two cities seem to have the inside track in landing franchises. Charlotte and Minneapolis may be the lucky winners.

8... Larry Bird: Ready, Willing and Able

Many feel that this has been Larry's best season, indeed his sterling play has resulted in many regular season victories for the Celts. Now the "second season" is upon us and Larry is poised for another championship.

20... Celts Honor the 1st Champions

Hard as it may seem to believe, the Celtics recently honored the 30th Anniversary of the first team to bring the trophy home to Boston. Attended by many players both past and present, the party was indicative of all the Celtics' endeavors... it was celebrated in pride, bonded in tradition.

Departments...

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NBA Proposes Expansion into Charlotte and Minneapolis

The NBA's Expansion Committee, after considering applications in seven cities, recommended that the league expand by adding three cities franchises: Charlotte in 1988-89, Minneapolis in 1988-89 or 1989-90, and either Miami or Orlando in '88-89 or '89-90, according to the NBA. The recommended purchase price is \$32.5 million per team.

The Expansion Committee includes Alan Cohen, co-owner of the Celtics, who is also Chairman of the NBA Board of Governors. The committee is chaired by Richard Bloch, owner of the Phoenix Suns; other members with Mr. Cohen included Herb Simon of the Pacers, Charlie Thomas of the Rockets, and Norm Sonju of the Mavericks. The committee's recommendations will be voted on by the NBA's Board of Governors, who meet this week in New York. A three-quarters vote of the Board, which consists of one owner from each team in the league, presently 23 teams, is required for the granting of an expansion franchise.

Charlotte received the earliest entry date because, it was reported, its new arena is scheduled to be completed at the earliest time.

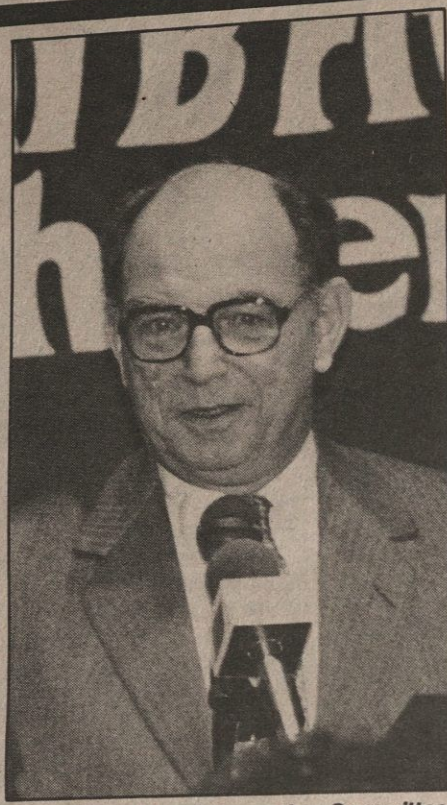
General Manager of the Celtics, Jan Volk, was reached for his views on the decision of the Expansion Committee. While Mr. Volk was unable to offer additional insight into the actual decision-making of the Committee, he did com-



G.M. Jan Volk: Charlotte is Hungry.

ment on the viability and attractiveness of the choices.

"Minneapolis is an established city and it appears the feeling was that since the area had a team before, it was to their



Alan Cohen is on Expansion Committee.

advantage. They have a building which is suitable for the prospective team and the ownership has a secured fan base.

"I think the conditions for Charlotte are a little different but nevertheless, they are favorable. There is a great basketball tradition in the Carolinas. I think the success of high school and collegiate programs is evidence of that. Also, there is no other professional team in the immediate area so there is, I suspect, a hunger for a franchise there."

There had been much speculation that a Florida team was likely but the Committee offered no final solution to that decision. It was determined that St. Petersburg, one of the three applicants, was not as ready as Miami or Orlando. Two other applicants, Toronto and Anaheim, were also ruled out. The decision between either Miami or Orlando was deferred until the annual meeting of the Board of Governors in October.

The league last expanded in 1980-81, when the Dallas Mavericks were admitted into the league. That franchise has been a staunch member of the league from its

inception, setting an expansion attendance record with an average of 7,789. The inclusion of the Mavericks brought the league to its present formation of 23 teams. GM Volk compared the two expansion eras.

"Oh, I don't think there's much doubt that the league is considerably stronger at this point in time. Now, beyond the collective bargaining issue, there are no real critical issues facing the league. I think the league is an attractive one, with winners in several cities and major attractions throughout the league, including Dallas (now).

"I think across the league, franchises are viable and are doing well in every aspect. Salaries are up throughout the league but then so are revenues for the individual franchises."

"Expansion is an issue which is vital to the future growth and continued success of the NBA," commented Bloch after the Expansion Committee had made its selections. The committee reviewed the applications after personally visiting each area. In addition, the cities were represented at the All-Star Game in Seattle.

According to Commissioner David Stern, television market size was a consideration, but not the crucial one in the deliberations concerning expansion. Volk, while reiterating that he was not party to the final decision, agreed with the commissioner on that issue.

Minneapolis was home city of the Lakers for 13 seasons before that franchise shifted to the West Coast in time for the 1960-61 NBA season. Charlotte, on the other hand, has had some exposure to the professional game. But this came in the form of the American Basketball Association which had the team, the Carolina Cougars. The Cougars, however, attempted to make this a regional franchise and they played games in several cities in the state. Billy Cunningham played one season with the Cougars before moving back to the Philadelphia 76ers. Cunningham now is involved with the Miami franchise, which is attempting to secure a place in the NBA.

Present plans are for established teams to protect eight players in a special draft to stock the new teams. However, a team can lose only one player per season. Also, it is tentatively scheduled that Charlotte and Minneapolis will participate in the annual college draft as a lottery team.

A New Fan Feature

Thanks For the Memories

What is your fondest memory of an encounter you had with a Celtics player, past or present? Or what is your favorite anecdote about the Celtics that you would like to see in print? Or how about that unforgettable moment in Celtics history that made you proud to be a Celtics fan?

We at Celtics Pride would like to devote a page entitled Thanks for the Memories to take a look at Celtics history from the fan's perspective. Please limit your story to about five hundred words, carefully typewritten and double spaced. A photograph of you with a player, if you have one, may accompany your article. (We will make every effort to return the photograph, but cannot be held responsible for it.) So jog your memories and share your stories with the rest of our readers.

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Ask Red Auerbach



EDITORS NOTE: "Ask Red Auerbach" is a regular feature of Celtics Pride. If you have a question for Red, please send it to Celtics Pride, 49 Locust Avenue, New Canaan, Connecticut 06840. Red will answer as many as possible in each issue.

QUESTION: Why, in your opinion, do the Celtics have such a great record at home? Is it the "Celtics Pride" or is it the attitude of the fans?

Brent Parker, Hacienda Heights, Calif.
RED'S ANSWER: There are many reasons why NBA teams, including but not only the Celtics, play so much better at home. At home, you get to sleep in your own bed, eat home-cooked food, relax with families and friends, and just generally live a more consistent, even life than on the road. On the road, you find yourself having trouble sleeping, watching movies, worrying about what's happening at home, eating junk food, etc.—basically feeling disoriented. I don't know whether you know this, but at this writing all but four teams—the Sacramento Kings, Los Angeles Clippers, New Jersey Nets and New York Knicks—have winning records at home, while only three—the Los Angeles Lakers, Atlanta Hawks and Detroit Pistons—have winning records on the road. Still, I'd be hard pressed to explain the disparity between our home and road records this year; I really don't understand it myself. At this date (April 8th), we are 36-2 at home and 19-20 on the road, quite a difference. Our home court, the Boston Garden, might be more of an advantage than most, since it's so much different than the typical NBA arena and floor. But even considering how good our team has been the last two years, our two-year home record of 76-3 (including 5-1 at the Hartford Civic Center) is just unbelievable. You probably know that last year's 40-1 home record was the best in the league's history, but did you know that the second-most home wins in the NBA history is 37? By winning two of our last three home games, we could top that mark. As far as explaining why we aren't doing better on the road—I can't. Last year, we finished 27-14 on the road; this year, we'll be lucky to finish over .500. That's disappointing, especially when we know that we'll probably have to win at least one game on the road to win the championship. Still, we're not panicking. We just need to bear down and concentrate to win on the road. And we'll have the home-court advantage—and 14,890 loud supporters—to help us at home.

QUESTION: How are player's numbers selected for retirement? Is Tommy Heinsohn's number retired?

Dick McLintock, Burlington, Vt.
RED'S ANSWER: Of course, Tommy Heinsohn's number is retired. His number 15 hangs from the rafters of the Garden along with the numbers of 12 other players. Also displayed on those same banners is one name—"Locsy" for Jim Loscutoff—whose number (18) was being worn by, and later retired in honor of, Dave Cowens. The numbers 1 and 2 are also on those banners. Number 1 was retired in honor of Walter Brown, our first owner and the founder of the team. Number 2 was retired in honor of a former redheaded coach and general manager of the team whose name eludes me right now. There is no specific formula for qualifying to have your number retired; it's more a sense of the extent of an individual's

contribution to our success. We have so many numbers retired because we've been fortunate enough to have achieved so much.

RETIRED CELTICS' NUMBERS

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 — Walter Brown | 18 — Dave Cowens |
| 2 — "Red" Auerbach | Jim Loscutoff* |
| 6 — Bill Russell | 19 — Don Nelson |
| 10 — Jo Jo White | 21 — Bill Sharman |
| 14 — Bob Cousy | 22 — Ed Macauley |
| 15 — Tom Heinsohn | 23 — Frank Ramsey |
| 16 — Tom (Satch) Sanders | 24 — Sam Jones |
| 17 — John Havlicek | 25 — K.C. Jones |
- *Loscutoff's jersey was retired, but number 18 was kept active for Dave Cowens.

QUESTION: The rule changes in the game of basketball recently have left me befuddled. You straightened out the illegal defense call in a past issue, but what about the jump ball? I thought the possession arrow decided them all, but occasionally in the NBA I see one jumped during the course of the game.

Jenny Goodburne, Alpern, MI
RED'S ANSWER: You're confusing college and professional basketball, whose rules do differ on jump balls. There is no possession arrow in the NBA. When the ball is tied up during the course of play, the two players involved have a jump ball in the circle closest to the spot where the tie-up occurred. In college, the possession arrow indicates which team gets the ball, with possessions

alternating. In the pros, a jump is held to start the game, and the team that wins gets that possession and the first one in the final period; the other team starts the second and third quarters with the ball. In college, each half starts with a jump ball. All clear?

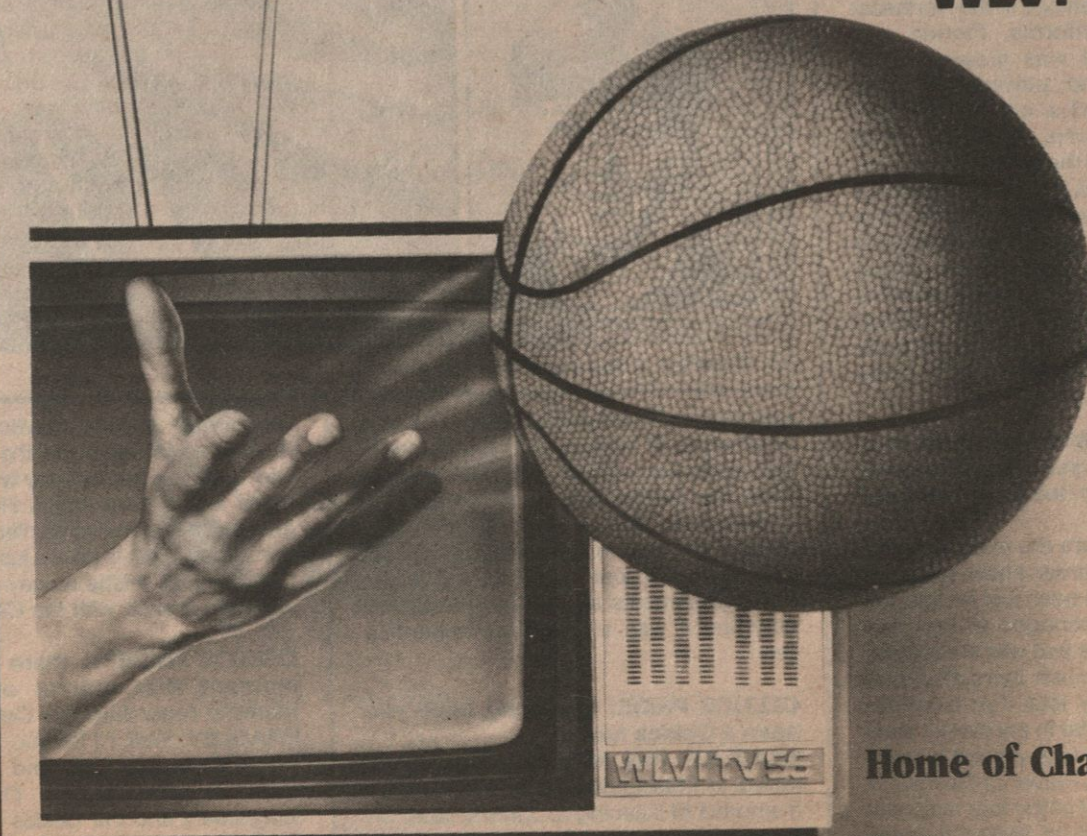
QUESTION: Why can a point guard be the smallest player on the floor?

Larry McGoldrick, Pelham, NY
RED'S ANSWER: Point guard is the position on a basketball team that least requires height. A good point needs a whole collection of other skills, however, particularly speed, ball-handling and passing abilities, good peripheral vision and a good shot. Since point guards are not looked to for rebounding, height is not a priority at all.

QUESTION: When you are thinking of making a trade or acquiring a new player, do you consult the players?

James Fitzgerald, Saugus, Mass.
RED'S ANSWER: Sometimes, sure. Our players are quite intelligent and they want the Celtics to be as good as possible. So I'd talk to a Cousy, a Havlicek, a Russell, or a Bird and say, "Hey, we've got a chance to get so and so. What do you think?" Why not ask them? I've never had the ego to think that I know it all. The coaching staff is also involved in every decision, as is Jan Volk. I would never take it upon myself to force any player down the coach's throat. Because if I give a player to the coach and the coach doesn't want him, he'll resent it and the production of the whole team will suffer.

When the Celtics are away... they're at home on 56 WLVI



Home of Champions!

BOSTON CELTICS PRIDE

Innerview

One Champion to Another

Pat Bradley: Devoted New England Fan

Pat Bradley met with as much success as the Celtics last year winning three out of four major tournaments and setting a record for top earnings ever in LPGA history.

Pat hails from the Boston area where she learned her trade at the Nashua, New Hampshire Country Club. *Celtics Pride* was able to speak with this great champion after a recent tournament in California.

CELTICS PRIDE: How did you become interested in playing, then pursuing golf as a career?

BRADLEY: Well, my father introduced me to it when I was eleven. My dad was a caddy when he was a youngster which is how he got interested in the game. He thoroughly enjoyed it, loved it actually. He believed that the game of golf is one of honesty and etiquette, a gentleman's game; he wanted everyone in the family (I have five brothers) to play. But I was the only one to take it to the professional level and it's been extremely rewarding and successful.

CELTICS PRIDE: Is there an optimal age to get started in learning the game?

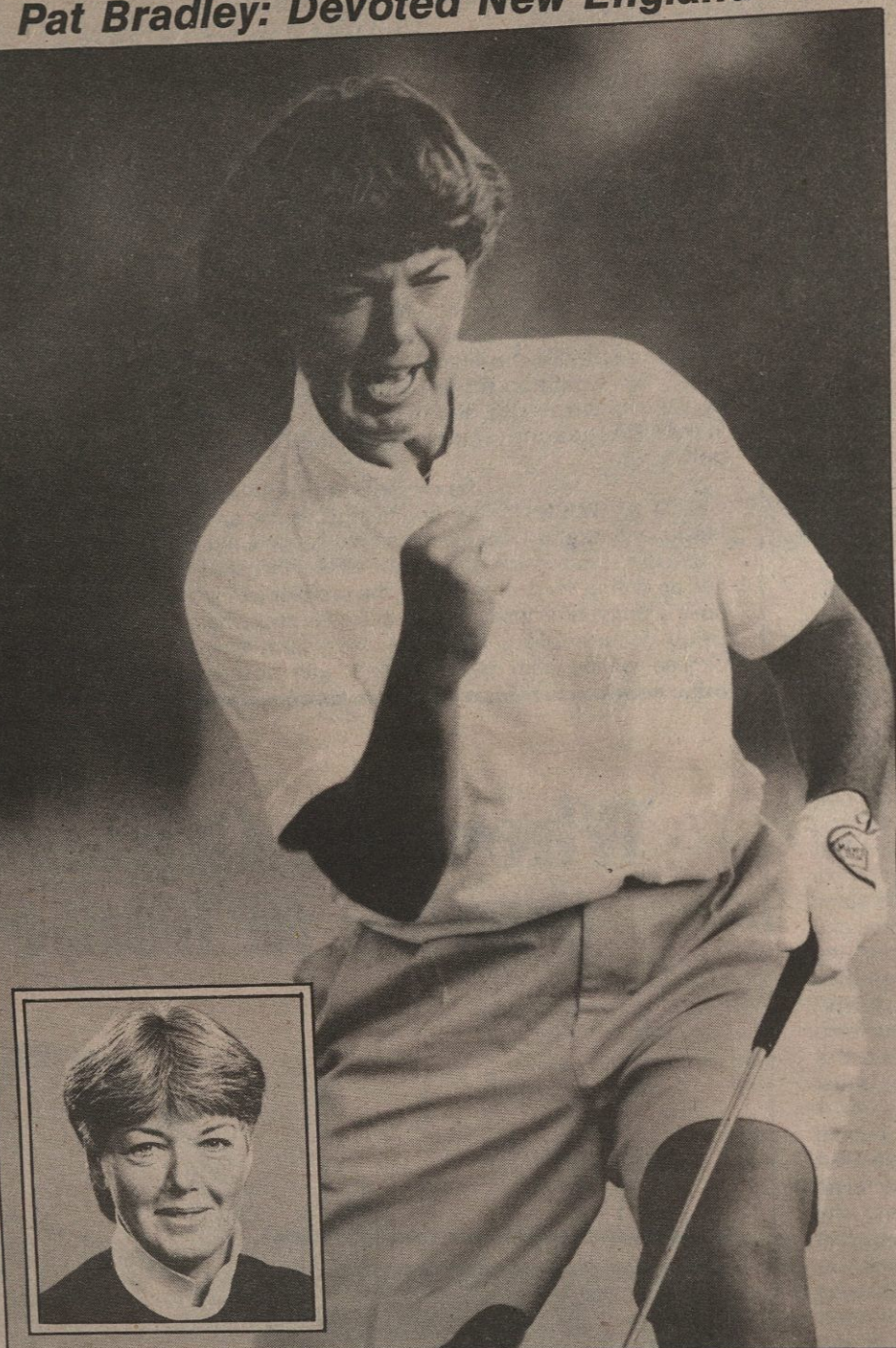
BRADLEY: I'll tell you, eleven is not a bad age to start. Some youngsters can fool around with a club when eight or nine, but I don't think most have the attention span necessary to practice seriously until they reach eleven or twelve.

CELTICS PRIDE: How much pressure were you under when competing in your first tournaments?

BRADLEY: The funny thing about it is when I was growing up, junior golf was not real big or well organized in the Northeast compared to California, Florida and Texas. So, when I was growing up in Massachusetts and playing the local clubs, there weren't a lot of junior programs available to me, so I found myself playing mostly with the guys and learning the competitiveness from the guys at the club and in get-togethers at home. Over the years I think that's been very beneficial to me because I'd go out with the guys at the club and play little skins tournaments or Nassau's with them. This way I learned very early how to compete; just because you're female doesn't mean they're going to treat you any differently.

CELTICS PRIDE: What has been your most successful year to date and, conversely, your least successful year?

BRADLEY: Well that's the really wonderful thing about my career. I have really not had a year where it's been just terrible. My worst year, I still managed to win over \$120,000, and to me that was a bad year, but I wouldn't get much sympathy from other people on my tour. I've been extremely fortunate so far in my career, and I think last year, 1986 was without a doubt my finest year. I was Player of the Year in 1986. I won three out of the four majors in our sport and ended up setting a single year earnings record of \$495,000. So last



Pat Bradley: A Die-hard Celtics Fan.

year was my finest year to date, and this is what we're all striving and working for in our profession. What I did last year, is what the Celtics did. They were world champions, and I was number one through the year in my profession. To tell the truth, I'm just as proud of these accomplishments as the Celts undoubtedly are. It was a very, very rewarding year.

CELTICS PRIDE: How long have you been a Celtics fan?

BRADLEY: Well, for a long time. I was raised in Massachusetts and have vivid memories of listening to Johnny Most on the radio doing the broadcast describing Bob Cousy's brilliant play. But mostly I

remember Johnny Havlicek and Bill Russell so I've followed the Celts all the way up to the present day with Larry and Kevin and Danny Ainge. He's great, he gets those opponents so riled up that they don't know what to do. It's just been a thrill. I usually lose a little money with the Sox and gain it back with the Celts.

CELTICS PRIDE: Is there a particular moment that stands out in your memory regarding the Celts?

BRADLEY: Well, I'll tell you, the year that we won against L.A. and I remember doing a press day in Denver for a tournament and the Celts had just lost the sixth game in L.A. and I remember standing up and beginning my interview

by saying, "Well, I have some good news and some bad news... the bad news is that the Celtics lost the sixth game of their playoffs against the Lakers, but the good news is that we're going back to THE OVEN for the seventh game!" Those Lakers could not handle the Garden and that was really a great series. It went down to the wire and went back and forth, but when the Lakers came to the oven they had no chance. I remember the announcers saying, "Well, there's no air-conditioning here at the Garden, but all the doors are open, which is about as close as they're going to get in cooling this place down." I mean I remember Kareem just fading fast. The poor guy was just loping down the court. It was such a nice memory. I mean here we are the blue-collar guys digging in, scrappy versus the jet-setters. We have everyday hard-working fans, where the Lakers have Jack Nicholson and who knows who else waving flags and mugging for the camera.

CELTICS PRIDE: Are you able to follow the Celts as much as you'd like during the tour?

BRADLEY: Yes. Actually I watch for them on T.V. and a lot of times the guys on tour with me will keep me abreast of what's happening during the traveling. But I always try as best as possible to watch their games.

CELTICS PRIDE: Are there any other Celtics fans, or fans of rival teams on tour with you?

BRADLEY: Well, I have a lot of rivals, when I play against some of the girls in California it gets a little hot. Amy Alcott is a big Lakers fan and when I play in LA or Houston I'll always get a razz if the Celts happen to come up short. But, of course most of the time the Celts are on top.

CELTICS PRIDE: Is there something inherent about the game of basketball that intrigues you?

BRADLEY: Actually, no. I enjoy all of Boston sports. I follow all the teams—the Celtics, Red Sox, Patriots and Bruins. I'm just so thankful to have most of them occur at different times of the year, so I can keep tabs on them. I'm a die-hard Boston fan, no matter what time of the year or who's playing... I'm a Bostonian from the word go.

CELTICS PRIDE: Will you be competing in the Boston area soon?

BRADLEY: Well, we play in Danvers near the end of June, and that's the closest we come to getting home here in the Boston area. My home is about 33 miles from Danvers, and that's the closest we get which is wonderful because Boston has some great golf courses and the fans are very enthusiastic and it's great going back to Massachusetts, to the Boston area and perform. We in Boston are not only team fans, we're also individual fans. I've been very fortunate to have crowds which were tremendous in their support.

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As Playoffs Approach, Larry is Ready, Willing and Able The Pride of the Celtics

It's an early April morning. Larry Bird, Rick Carlisle, Conner Henry, Dennis Johnson, and Kevin McHale are on the practice floor shooting in an optional practice Coach K.C. Jones has called. The Celtics however are uncharacteristically struggling at this time of the year. Playoff time and the Celtics have lost eight of their last nine road games; these are games (on the road) which Larry Bird describes as the difference between teams going some distance in the postseason and losers. But there are reasons. Bird discusses these after the informal workout, wearing a 1985 NBA Finals baseball-style cap, a pullover shirt, dungarees and white sneakers. He's in superior physical condition, now, the best he's felt in this area all year and he also bears a slight scar beneath his right eye, the result of an elbow from Akeem Olajuwon when the Celtics defeated the Rockets, 99-92 at The Summit, February 23rd. The win over the Rockets came during the team's triumphant tear through the West and it is that time Bird is talking about.

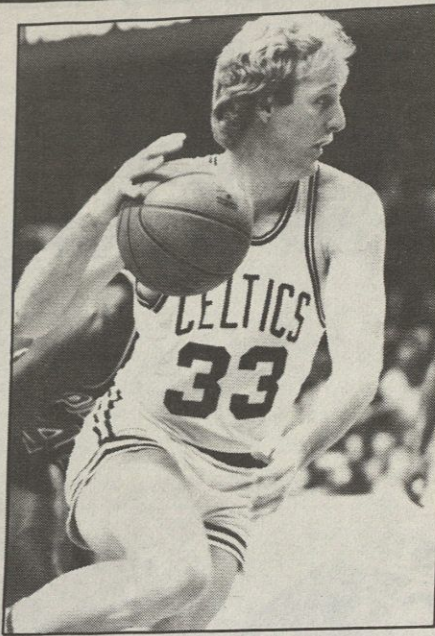
"I'll tell you. On that trip (7 wins out of 9), every game we went out there we were mentally prepared. We knew as a five-man unit, we were going to be out there most of the game with only a few minutes out for substitutes.

"Right now, it's sad. We haven't had our whole team together. We have been lagging a bit... we've talked about some of these things as a group but we haven't been able to work on the flaws as a team because at one time or another, Dennis Johnson, Robert Parish, Kevin McHale, or myself have missed games. You're not used to playing with substitutes whose role normally is to play a few minutes. With it all, I think we'll win. But it's hard when DJ has a sore shoulder, to take an example. It's vital for our attack that he be able to hit the open 15-foot shot."

From the date of the 1979 NCAA tournament when Larry Bird emerged from mystery and deeply embedded his greatness into the national consciousness, he has repeatedly starred; especially in the postseason. For the past three seasons he has been the Most Valuable Player in the league. In 1984 and 1986 he was Playoff MVP and he probably should have won the designation in 1981, the team's first championship of the Bird era. The magnificence of Larry Bird as a player is the culmination of many factors, but it is useful to remember that it originated early, before he ever stepped on the floor as a Celtic and it has never wavered, regressed whatsoever. Larry Bird was a great professional player at Indiana State as a sophomore.

"We brought a bunch of players from our team," recalls Indiana Pacer assistant coach Mel Daniels, who in 1975 was finishing his career as an MVP of several Pacer ABA champions. "We brought Freddy Lewis, Roger Brown, and Bob Netolicky to Terre Haute to scrimmage against the Bird. Larry dominated them. As a sophomore in college."

Recall Bird as a collegiate All-American and the vision is one of a powerful post-up player who dominated space inside. Yet, there he was, taking passes out on either wing and swishing home long jumpers.



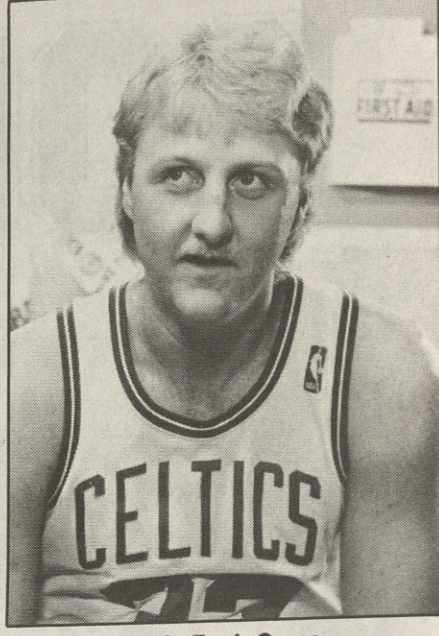
Bird: All Out, All Time, All Star.

Bird had a 30.3 ppg average at Indiana State on .533 shooting. The story of his (senior year) cinderella Sycamore season, the team that went 33-0 until the final game loss to Michigan State (with Magic Johnson, Gregory Kelsey, and Jay Vincent) has been well chronicled. That season concluded a phase of Bird's life which began with his leaving the University of Indiana as a freshman, trying junior college before dropping out, and then becoming a full fledged star in the national spotlight. Larry Bird was literally a giant with Indiana State. In the Final Four, he shot 15-17 against DePaul and Mark Aguirre and his 37 point game shouldn't overshadow his brilliant passing which hypnotized the Blue Demons. On the game's opening play for example, Bird received the tip and backtapped a no-look pass to Carl Nicks to begin a pressure cooker basketball game. By the end of the game, the fans at Special Events Center at the University of Utah held their breath with each of Bird's calculated, but spontaneous, moves. Fluid and graceful, Bird is infused nevertheless with power (Celtics Coach K.C. Jones likes to call Bird a "street fighter").

Last week in Boston Jay Vincent recalled Bird as a collegiate. "I didn't know much about him until I began seeing him on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*. He was great talent in the final game though, we had too many players."

"I thought Michigan State had the best team," Bird now confides. Then there's a hedge. "But when we went into the final game, we were playing very well so I didn't concede anything." For the record, Michigan State Coach Jud Heathcote had a box and one on Bird, with another two players shadowing the forward. Most times, there were four players converging on Bird.

Bird and Johnson entered the NBA in 1980 and from that point, a rivalry developed through the present season, though now they compete as friends. Last summer, for example, Bird played with Johnson in a charity game set up by Magic for a fund for black colleges. The game was played at Pauley Pavilion in



Larry: Controls Each Game.

UCLA. Early in Bird's career, though, he was still seeking the championship he had failed to gain in the 1979 title match. Bird's rookie year was sensational as he brought the Celtics to the regular season championship. He took off particularly when veteran Center Dave Cowens, having a strong comeback season, was injured. In Cowens' absence, Bird averaged 28.4 ppg and hit a season-high 45 against Phoenix in February. Although the Celtics didn't play well in the Eastern Conference Finals against the 76ers, Bird had sustained his regular season excellence. In both the regular season and playoffs, he averaged 21.3 ppg and 11 rebounds. Despite fatigue, he was dominant on the boards against Philadelphia and in Game 2, the lone Celtic victory, Bird was overwhelming, scoring 36 points with 14 rebounds. "Larry was never a rookie," states Bob Ryan of *The Boston Globe*. The following season brought Bird's first professional title and the accomplishments and exciting individual plays have gushed from the 6-foot-9 225-lb. player, shooter, rebounder and best passing forward ever, from that season to the present. For example, here are some career highlights.

Nineteen eighty-one: Averaged 26.7 ppg and 13.4 rebounds against Philadelphia and 15.3 points and rebounds against Houston. 1982: Most Valuable Player of the All-Star Game. 1983: Set first Celtic scoring record, 53 against Indiana. 1984: After the Celtics were swept in the playoffs the previous year by Milwaukee (a series Bird suffered with the flu), Bird vowed he'd rededicate himself to the game. In this season, he won the aforementioned MVP awards; he had 39 points, 15 rebounds, 10 assists to win Game 7 against New York in the playoffs and later hit the game-winning turnaround jumper over Johnson to key The Finals win over the Lakers. 1985: MVP, and a 28.7 ppg average and 60 against the Hawks in New Orleans. Over 40 points nine times and a 26.0 ppg scoring average in the playoffs. In 1986, "He was better," claimed Scott Wedman. "He played with Bill Walton. He understood the team game better than ever." Yet he

still averaged 25.8 ppg and 25.9 in the playoffs. He won three Man of the Year awards last year, as his consistent high level of play is increasingly appreciated by a culture that loves and damns its heroes.

This season, despite bothersome injuries, Bird is averaging 26.4 ppg including 30.0 over the last month. He will finish the season with his best career assist total, too. "I think Larry's confidence grew when he won his first MVP award," thought Robert Parish in 1985, Bird's best sustained scoring regular season. But something happened; Bird burned out in the playoffs, injured his elbow. He was a sad man when he received the league MVP as the Celts were going down to LA in that year's playoffs.

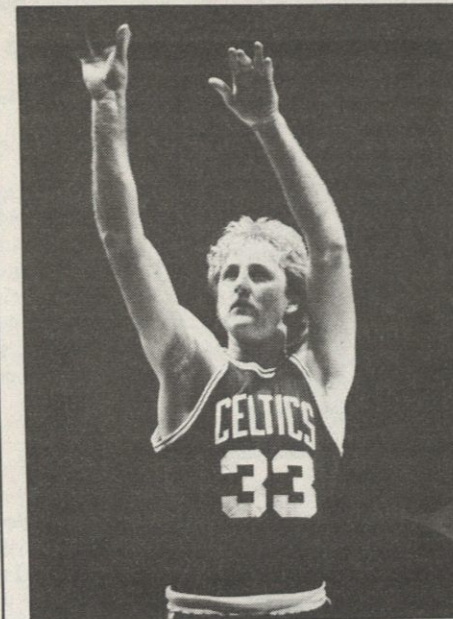
"Larry got stronger and stronger last season, you'll notice," claims Walton. "What sets Larry apart is his heart, his ability to win, and his mind. Look what he's doing now: leading a team which is without Scotty Wedman, Len Bias, and myself. Larry Bird is a leader by the way he plays, by his approach to the game, and the way he leads his life."

Bird has been the subject of stories in *Time Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, the three major television networks and he personally has traveled the world, once teaming up with Johnson as collegiates on a European tour, another occasion visiting Israel with Agent Bob Woolf. This is a tall man but a big man, too; "with competitiveness" thinks Indiana Assistant Dick Harter, he has risen above the greatest basketball players alive. Yet as a teammate, he demonstrates and employs an understanding that uniquely allows him to use all of his deep skills individually, while still being unselfish.

"There isn't too much I can do," offered Bird last week about the struggle and injuries of the current team. "But this is the worst we've been playing as a team heading into the playoffs since I've been here. Asked what he can do as a team leader, the player responds, "I don't talk much. The first couple of games of the playoffs are crucial. If we play well, we'll do fine the rest of the way. I just have to hope, and pray, and try to take charge as a leader out there. I think the awareness that we have of our problems will help us; we'll be prepared and I think we'll play very well."

Bird leaves the practice gym now, practice, play, joking, and interviews over. This is the man who's won it all three times individually and on the team level as well. He negotiated consecutive long-term contracts with Woolf, commensurate with the money he generates for the team and for the game. He has a balance between his cherished privacy away from the game and his single-minded dedication to it. "His concentration is on another level," muses Wedman. As a young NBA player, Bird let the game come to him, and won a championship; in 1984, he overworked, and won again, and his fifth game in the Garden vs. the Lakers, 34 points, 15-20 FGs, in 97° heat was maybe his most memorable game ever. In 1986, with Walton, Parish, Johnson, and Ainge, he struck an unprecedented balance between individual skill and team orchestration. He has all this and the love of the game as he drove home from a voluntary practice.

Larry Bird's Resume



Larry Bird: Enduring Legacy.

Larry Bird is one of the most honored basketball players in the history of the game. Since the time he finally was able to leave the scars of a broken ankle behind in his junior season at Springs Valley High School. Following is a comprehensive list of honors, awards, statistical achievements that this magnificent player has produced in his fifteen-year basketball career, covering high school, college, all-star games and his career as a Celtic.

HIGH SCHOOL

All-Sectional and All-Regional Senior Season, Springs Valley
All-State *Bloomington Daily Herald-Telephone*
Indiana All-Star Team, *Indianapolis Star*
Indiana-Kentucky All-Star Game
Senior Season: Averaged 30.6 ppg with a single game high of 55. His high rebounding game was 38. Bird averaged 20.6 rebounds per game. Recruited and signed as a freshman by Bobby Knight of Indiana University. Bird left during his freshman season and didn't resume playing collegiate basketball until 1976-77. Bird's second-high game: 54 points.

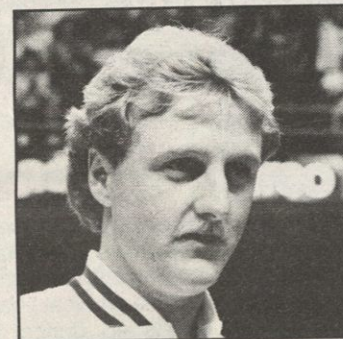
Now: Bird makes sure that 50 balls and 50 pairs of new shoes arrive at the gym of Springs Valley High School each year. The number 33 is stitched on each player's warm-up jacket. The school is located on Larry Bird Blvd. in French Lick.

COLLEGE

Holds 14 of Indiana State's Records, including single-game scoring (49), highest scoring average season of 32.8, most rebounds season of 505 and single season rebounding average of 14.9.

All-American Third Team sophomore

Self-Portrait



Larry Bird

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: December 7, 1956 in West Baden, Indiana

GOALS IN BASKETBALL: To win the championship

GOALS AFTER BASKETBALL: Retire peacefully, maybe teach, maybe do some coaching

FAVORITE PERFORMERS: Kenny Rogers, Bill Cosby, some Alabama

IDEAL EVENING: Spending it with close friends, having a relaxing dinner, or for a change, strolling leisurely down in Faneuil Hall

IF YOU COULD GO BACK IN TIME, WHAT YEAR WOULD IT BE AND WHY? Maybe go back and change a few losses into victories and come away with another championship, probably at the high school level, although I think everything happens for a reason.

PEOPLE WHO KNEW ME IN HIGH SCHOOL THOUGHT I WAS: Dedicated, and fun-loving

MY MOST IRRATIONAL ACT: Ejected for throwing a ball at an official in New Jersey in 1983

MY MOST RECURRING FANTASY: Ah, I've got most of them

THE BEST TIME I'VE HAD: Winning championships and seeing my family do well

THE WORST TIME I'VE HAD: Again, it would have to be a professional matter. Probably during the 1985 playoff Final when we lost to the Lakers. We had a strong enough team to win that year and I thought I had a strong season, but we just came up short.

LAST BOOK READ: *A Season on the Brink*

FAVORITE MEAL: I enjoy seafood pretty well, but I enjoy well-prepared beef, especially steak.

IF I WENT TO THE MOON, THE PEOPLE I'D BRING WITH ME: Close friends, people who accept me as I am. I'd want to keep tabs on my family so I guess I'd bring somebody from my family, too.

season and First Team as junior and senior Consensus Player of the Year 1979 as selected by AP (Rupp Trophy) and INS (Naismith Trophy), USBAW (Writers), *The Sporting News*, *Basketball Weekly*, and the Eastman Award.

BS in Physical Education

In 94 games, scored over 40 points 15 times, 30+ points 49 times and 20 or more 87 (out of 94 career) games

Record at Hulman Center on Indiana State campus was 50-1

Sycamores record was 81-13

Member of the USA World University Games Gold Medal Team at Sofia Bulgaria

Competed for USA in World Invitational Tournament

Player of the Year Missouri Valley Conference 1978 and 1979

Second to Oscar Robertson in Missouri Valley Conference in scoring and rebounding

PROFESSIONAL CAREER

Most Valuable Player, 1984, 1985, 1986
Most Valuable Player of the Playoffs, 1984 & 1986

Highest single season scoring average: 28.7 (1984-85)

Highest single game scoring as a Celtic: 60 vs. Atlanta, 1985

Second highest: 53 against Indiana

Bird has had 42 career triple doubles

Triple double at the half of April 1, 1986 game vs. Washington

Game high of Assists: 17 vs. Warriors, 1984

Game high rebounds: 21 on three different occasions

Team championships, 1981, 1984, 1986

Made the first 3-point Field Goal in League All-Star Game history as a rookie

Three-point Field Goal champion at annual All-Star Game contest, 1986 and 1987
Man of the Year of *The Sporting News*, *The Boston Herald*, *The New York Post*, and *Consensus*, *Basketball Digest*, Miller-Lite MVP

Featured on the covers of *Sports Illustrated*, *Sport*, *Time Magazine*, *Inside Sports*, *Street and Smith's*, *The Sporting News*, *Basketball Weekly*

His Moves, according to *Sports Illustrated*: Outside Shooting, Pump Fakes and Step-backs. Ambidexterity. Passing. Rebounding. Performing in the Clutch. Playing Hard. The Mental Game.

Single Game high in Field Goals: 22 against New York, April 12, 1987

Rookie High: 45 against Phoenix

Injuries: Back, Achilles, elbow, ankle, jaw.

Captain of the Celtics, 1984

Triple double against Utah, 1985, with 9 steals before sitting out the last quarter.

Free Throw Shooting title 1984, 1986, 1987

Consecutive free throws of 46 is third time over 40 and the second highest in Celtics history

Holds NBA record for most points scored in a playoffs, 1984

Fouled out for first time since 1980 on April 3 vs. Detroit

Scored over 40 points 26 times as Celtic

Playoff high scoring: 47

Pre-season high: 40

50 points or more: three times

Has led the Celtics in minutes, FGM, FGA, defensive rebounds, steals, points and scoring every year as a pro.

The Celtics have never had a losing month in Bird's eight-year career.

Inscription on plaque awarded to him by city of Terre Haute: "Thank you for helping us to be proud of ourselves."

What They're Saying About Larry

Bobby Knight, Coach of Indiana University on the time that Bird was at IU as a freshman, but then decided to leave the university, claiming it was too large. Knight on his reaction to Bird's decision in 1974: "We were right in the midst of having a good basketball team, maybe the best team ever. When Bird left, we hadn't even noticed. It was like, 'the hell with him.' I wouldn't chase (Quinn) Buckner. I wouldn't chase (Scott) May. Well, I'll be damned if I'm going to chase this kid. That was kind of it. If that would have happened today, I would talk to him. I'd tell him what a hell of a mistake he was making, that this (Indiana) was far and away the best place for him... I'm older now. It was a mistake I didn't do it then."

Bob Ryan after the Celtics drafted Bird in 1979: "What is a Larry Bird? Larry Bird is a 6-foot-9 sturdy blonde amalgam of Bob Pettit, Dan Issel, and Rick Barry. He has the shooting range and stick-it-in-your-face shooting style of Pettit, the all-around inside game and scoring savvy of Issel and the passing ability of Barry. Next to Earvin Johnson, he's probably the best passing big man around. He works hard on defense, and has good instincts. He rebounds well and does not run away when the traffic gets heavy underneath. Just thinking of him playing alongside Dave Cowens makes me want to go out and buy seven basketball magazines."

Red Auerbach, on waiting a season when the junior-eligible Bird decided to sit out a season before turning pro: "When you're waiting for a Larry Bird, time passes quickly."

K.C. Jones, his Coach in Boston, compared Bird and Bill Russell, who Jones played with from 1955-66: "They both have burning determination. They've crossed the line. They have to win. You watch Larry and you see him diving after balls and getting floor burns and getting knocked down under both boards, and he still comes back for more. Both he and Russell were into every play of every game physically as well as mentally."

"A guy like Larry gives the fan in the stands an idea of creativity and imagination that most can't equal. He provides them entertainment, which is part of what this is all about."

Richard Waters, *The Sporting News* president as that publication named Bird its Man of the Year in 1986: "At French Lick (Ind.), only his teammates knew. At Indiana State, the coaches knew. After seven years with the Boston Celtics, the whole world knows. Larry Bird is the epitome of superstars. Yet the dominant force in the NBA mixes his genius harmoniously with his humility. It's for these and other attributes that *The Sporting News* salutes him as its Man of the Year."

Celtics Perspective

How do you Prepare for a Game?

As the 1986-87 season entered the final stages, the Celtics again were in the elite of the league. Yes, there had been the injuries and periods of irregular play. There had been several different lineups this year, a marked contrast to a season ago when stability existed.

"People forget," cautioned Jerry Sichting last week, "that we struggled last year, too. But last season our slump came early and we peaked from December forward. There's no set way to win. All that matters is you do (win)."

With the games counting seemingly everything as the playoffs approached, several Celtics players were asked how they prepared themselves mentally and physically for each game.



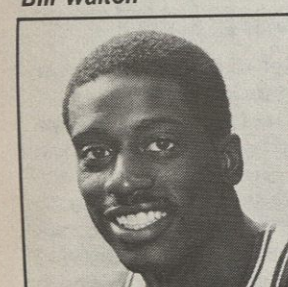
Larry Bird

Larry Bird. I try to keep my mind on the game although with the schedule it's almost impossible to define a particular routine. When the schedule is spaced out enough and I'm able to get some rest, I'm relaxed before games (then I'm able to have a set routine). When it's a more important regular season game or playoff, naturally you're more tense. But I don't make major changes during the playoffs.



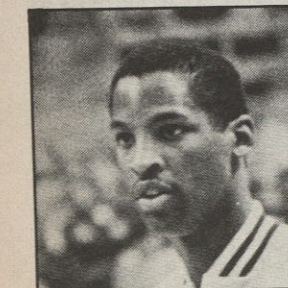
Bill Walton

Bill Walton. On game days, I'm thinking basketball. Although I haven't been out there as often as I would want to be this year, I can say that the shootarounds are useful to me because they keep my game sharp, and my camaraderie with my teammates consistent. During the day of the game, I'll try to rest some but the intensity is usually high. I'll listen to music, usually the Grateful Dead on my way to the arena, and in the locker room before the game, watch the tapes, stretch, and think basketball exclusively.



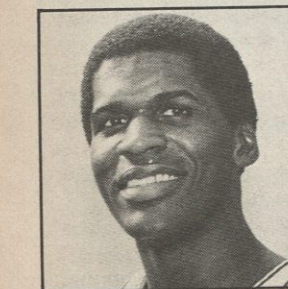
Sam Vincent

Sam Vincent. I don't have a specific routine. Sometimes during the day of the game I'll take a nap, sometimes I won't. My diet on game day is nothing special. I'll eat anything (healthy) really. All that I do care about is having the meal four hours before the game. Mentally I think about who I'm up against and how they play. Conversely, I want to remember how well I've done against them. I want to know the strongest part of the other team's game as a whole, too. The playoffs are more intense and have a lot more meaning but I try not to handle it differently.



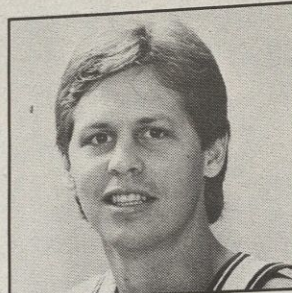
Darren Daye

Darren Daye. I think like everybody else I take a 1 1/2-2 hour nap in order to relax before the game. I don't think too much about the game during the day but rather look for a balance. I just want to be prepared. I don't make changes when the playoffs start. I'm looking for consistency in my routines.



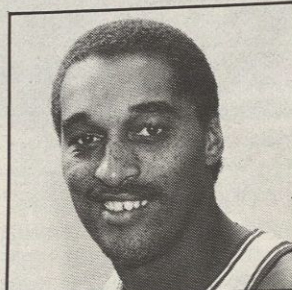
Robert Parish

Robert Parish. My mental approach is mainly to stay quiet. I don't think too much about the game during the day (nothing about strategy until the pre-game meeting with the coaching staff). During the day of the game I'll relax, maybe watch television. I don't really follow a set routine, so there aren't major changes in the playoffs.



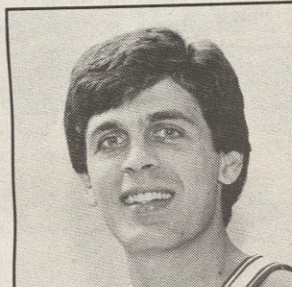
Danny Ainge

Danny Ainge. I try to maintain a relaxed approach but nothing specific really. I think you can get too serious about it sometimes, especially during the long season when you have to stay steady and avoid any peaks and valleys. But in the playoffs I build myself up throughout the last few months. Ideally, my intensity is at a peak when the post season is reaching its important time. I think you have to prepare yourself for a nine month season.



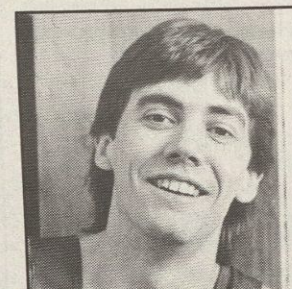
Dennis Johnson

Dennis Johnson. I don't really have a previously thought out ritual but I do find myself doing similar things each game day. I'll get to the game early and take my time dressing. I'll watch tapes of the team we play that night and maybe I'll talk to some visitors in the locker room, or sign some basketballs. I relax before the game but mentally, I'm very serious about it, too.



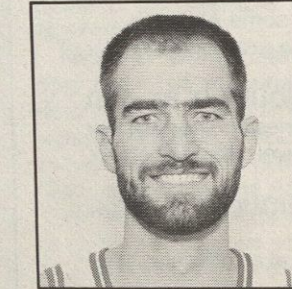
Kevin McHale

Kevin McHale. This is a team sport so before a game, what works best for me is to spend time with my teammates. Nothing snobbish about it; they are the ones who are going through the same preparations as I am and are generally the ones I feel best around. I limit my pre-game interviews to an occasional few. I like to get some shots before the game but my mental approach for the most part is to stay loose but to keep my focus on playing well.



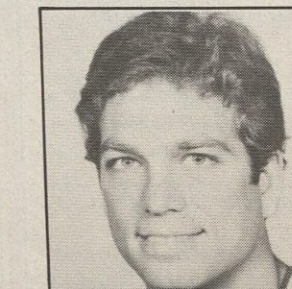
Conner Henry

Conner Henry. I think repetition is important and related to my approach. During the day of a game I want to have a good meal and afterwards I want to get some rest. I need to concentrate on what I have to do that night and I guess that builds up during the day as the game approaches.



Fred Roberts

Fred Roberts. I'll just think about the game, nothing special. I get quiet during game day and try to catch some sleep when I can. For me, with some of my physical limits, the most preparing I do is physical. I need to be in better physical condition than my opponent, in order for me to compete well. Mentally, it's mostly study rather than any self-psychoing. What does my opponent do? How effective have I been in the past against him? What are his tendencies? Then I'll go into a game and feel ready.



Jerry Sichting

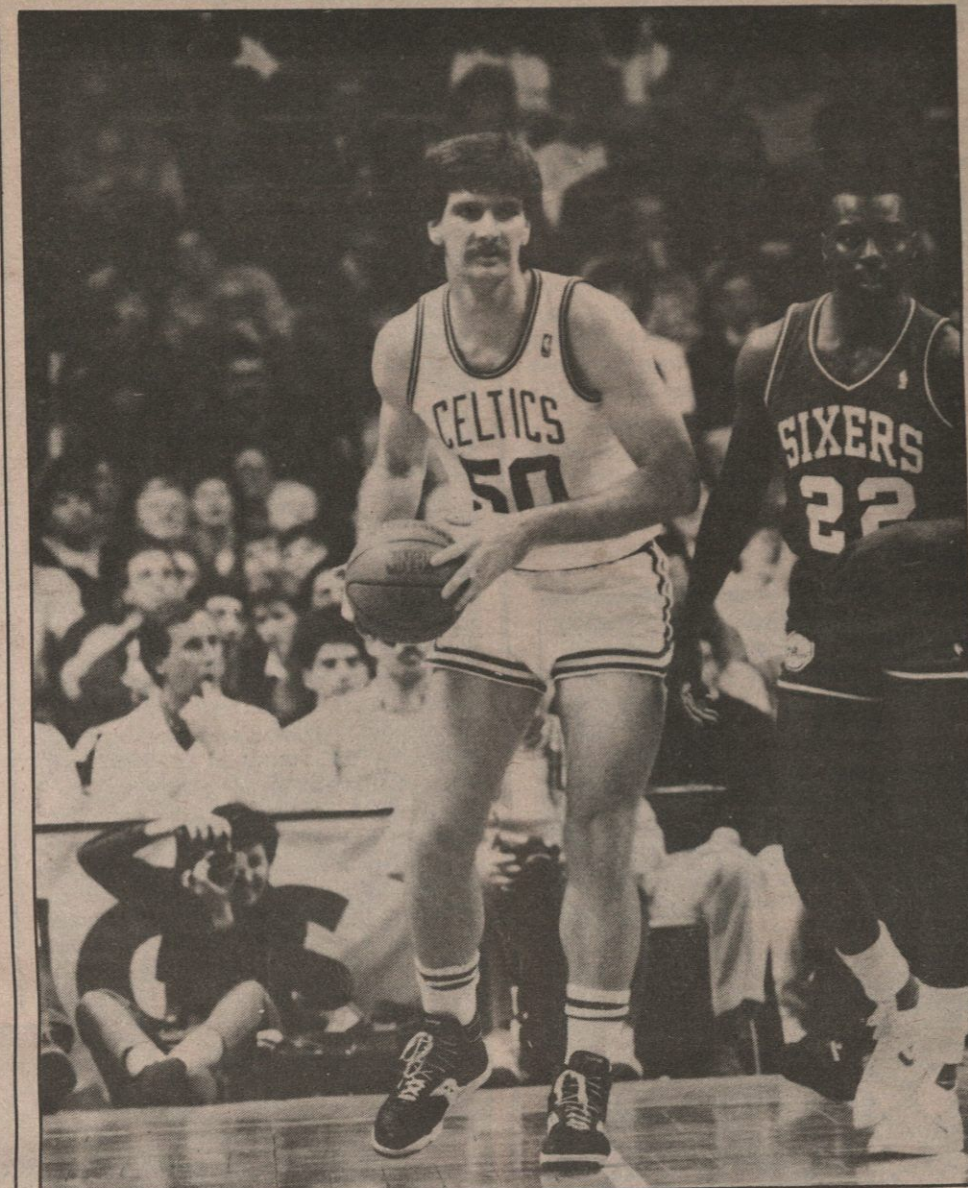
Jerry Sichting. I think about the game often the night before. About the matchup I'm likely to encounter and what that player likes to do. I have a black book on everybody and I pretty much know how they did in the previous game and what went well for me. Did they score? What shut them down?, for example. The playoffs tend to be more physical and more intense so there is more study involved. More time for preparation and probably more videotape, too.

Celtics Diary

Greg Kite has consistently contributed to the Celtics off the bench in his four seasons with the Celtics. After serving a rookie apprenticeship, his import grew during the Celtics strong season in 1984-85 when they were edged out for the NBA title by the Los Angeles Lakers. In that series, Kite seemed to find himself professionally when he provided necessary relief minutes for Robert Parish in that series.

"Statistics don't show what Greg does for our team" Larry Bird has said. "We don't worry about points from Greg. We need his strength, position, defense and rebounding." After Bill Walton joined the team before last season, Kite's role changed as he took on some minutes at power forward, too. In one key effort during last season's championship run, Kite outplayed Larry Smith of the Warriors, one of the league's best rebounders. It was an effort K.C. Jones continuously came back to when discussing Kite's role with the team. In The Finals last season, Kite played several valuable minutes in Game 2 against Houston, outrunning Akeem Olajuwon to set up the Celtics for a second quarter runaway. This season, Jones has continued to use Kite in specific roles, notably against Celtic nemesis, Charles Barkley of the 76ers. In December, Kite neutralized the powerful young star, and it was important in a 108-106 Celtic win. Another encounter versus Barkley last week begins this issue's Celtics Diary.

April 5. Philadelphia. We had another tough road game, in what seems to be the trend lately this season. After defeating the Pistons Friday night in the Garden, we lost here today, 106-104 in OT. We had some very good moments in this game, and some bad. My own highlight, if you want to call it that, was a fight with Charles Barkley of the Sixers.



Greg Kite: Increasing Importance

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The Increasing Importance of Greg Kite

do enjoy working with kids right now.

April 7. Cleveland. Another road defeat, this time to the Cavs who pulled away from us late in the 3rd period to win. The Green Team has faced some criticism but I think that's been overblown. First, I don't think you can separate a "Green" team from the whole team. On the road, yes, we haven't played as well as a team this season, but our record is not much worse than last year, when we won 25 road games. There are only two or three teams in the league with better road marks in the league than us.

"I was told, 'that I don't back down.' Why should I? Really I'm not scared to do what's legal out there. Box out; play strong position defense. Any pushing and shoving is a matter of give and take."

April 9. Boston. K.C. (Jones) gave the team an optional practice this morning and I didn't go to that, although I ran five miles this afternoon. I read in the papers about the way the team has struggled, and I guess that it can be viewed that way. Our troubles on the road have been well documented although I believe it's more than a road difficulty. I think we've had problems putting teams away once we had them down. We lost two long leads in Atlanta, one in New York earlier this year, and in a game in Los Angeles, we were up by seventeen points and let that one get away.

Right now, as with any team, we're slumping, but during a long season, a team is going to have its ups and downs. Injuries have played a factor, and fatigue. Then there are the results: turnovers, and you don't get breaks on calls when you're behind and on the road with the crowd and momentum going against you. And you do get outplayed from time to time in this very competitive league.

Away from the court, I try to maintain a consistent training regimen. Late in the season, you don't get as much practice time; the schedule might have you playing three games in four nights, with a travel day in between. Often, you're flying into the city the day of the game, as we will in New Jersey tomorrow, and you only have time to have a few hours and then play. For players who don't get extended minutes, it's difficult to maintain a playing rhythm. I'll work out after practice to brush up on some things and I lift weights at least once a week. I ran today; I'll do something every day to keep my wind sharp.

April 10. New Jersey. Another game against an Eastern Conference opponent, who have played us tough all season. We had some problems with the Nets the last time we played them in New Jersey after jumping out to a large halftime lead.

I still believe we're among the best teams in the league, if not the best. We'll see. I think we have a strong, experienced team that has the advantage of playing several years together.





K.C.s Corner

Regular Season Summary

We approach the playoffs with the best record in the Eastern Conference and I believe, with the misfortune which overtook the team this season, the players must be praised for a tremendous season. I was asked recently to comment on the biggest surprise of our season and it would have to be the injuries following us around all season, like a dark cloud. Besides the loss of Bill Walton and Scott Wedman for virtually the entire season, there have been other problems bothering Larry Bird, Danny Ainge, and Dennis Johnson. It was the worst year I've ever been through in this area. But we've gone beyond what limits these injuries imposed.

I believe we're capable of having a strong playoff however. As the regular season came to an end, we were trying to correct some problems in our offensive execution. It's getting late and we need to be strong in this area as we head into the playoffs.

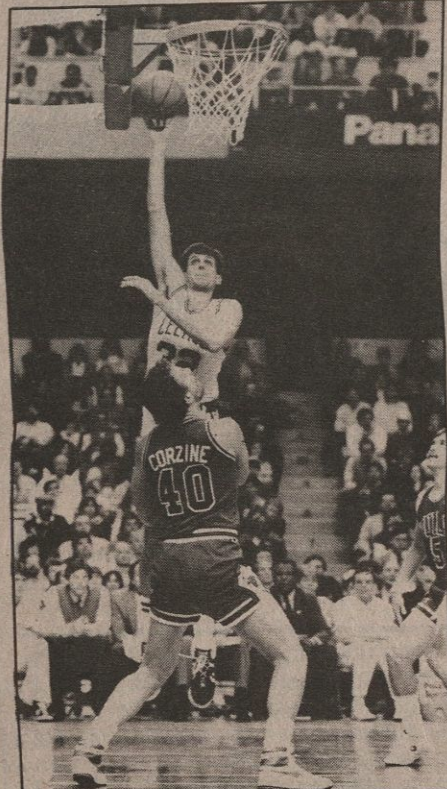
In this column, a brief summary of the players' season for us. I'm biased; I still believe we've had a strong season.

Kevin McHale. It's been a monumental season for Kevin McHale. His scoring has been over 26 ppg all season, including a streak in the beginning of the year when he scored over 20 points in 27 straight games. His defense has also been outstanding and I use him most times against our opponents' strongest offensive threat. Without his work on both boards, we'd have been lost, without Walton and without Larry Bird at some points of the year. Kevin helped carry this team.

Larry Bird. Larry's the most complete player in the game. His rebounding, passing, shooting, and defense are the best. He's a street fighter, too; a superior blend of grace and strength. That scrap fills out his whole game. We think Larry is playing his best ball right now, a veteran who now also has brought an understanding of the pace of the regular and postseasons.

Robert Parish. Robert has made our team game possible this season; his unselfishness, his defense, his shot-blocking, his clutch play have been necessary contributions to our ballclub. He turned it up against Philadelphia when Larry was missing, for example, and this season, he's turned in his most consistent rebounding games since he's been here.

Dennis Johnson. Our organization



Kevin McHale: A Monumental Season.

thinks that Dennis is an all-star. He is all-NBA defensive player, he's a tiger in the clutch, and his role in our offense is point guard. We look to Dennis for leadership out there on the offense, but then you look to the other end, and it's Dennis also who's playing the other club's toughest offensive threat. Dennis, like Larry, is at his best when the chips are on the table.

Danny Ainge. I look at Danny's main contribution as coming on the defensive end. It's all there—individual matchups, helping out when we're forced into the position of doubling down low; and defensive rebounding. Danny is always diving out of bounds to save balls for our team, mainly because of his alertness. Danny Ainge has made a big jump this season, into the class of the best guards in the League. He's capping off a great season.

Jerry Sichting. One of our goals as we headed into the playoffs was to get Jerry more playing time. I think that it's helped his game; the quick inside to outside pass for his jumper has again brought us points and his hard-nosed defense, always there, hasn't been diminished.

Fred Roberts. Roberts had also had problems when he wasn't getting enough minutes, but when he's been asked to fill in as a starter, things have gone much better for him. I think he's given us a great deal this year in running the court and with his strong defensive play. It's hard to predict at this time, but he may play a valuable role for us in certain spots in the playoffs.

Darren Daye. Darren came in late but he's more than made up for any time he's missed by his scrap and his usefulness as an extra ballhandler as a small forward. He's a better passer than he appears to be, and his penetration and jumping ability inside make him important to our team. It's not important that you score many points or attempt to be a hero off the bench. Play the other team steady, and keep us competitive for 48 minutes as a relief player. And Darren has met our needs.

Greg Kite. The game is a contact affair, and Greg Kite doesn't back down. No one can push him around, as evidenced by the unfortunate shoving match with Charles Barkley of the 76ers in our game down in Philly last week. Greg can rebound and make the pass in the set offense, as well as the break. The effects of a physically

courageous player picks up an entire ballclub. The reliability of others on him is invaluable.

Bill Walton. A hard, hard season. Bill played six games this season and he's spent much of the year trying to make it back. We all feel bad for him (We know how bad he feels). At this point, we can't count on him.

Conner Henry. A rookie player who's still learning, but a young player who has a chance. Conner's a project. He passes well and he sometimes is able to hit the outside shot.

Sam Vincent. Sam has had some fine moments for us this season, particularly early on in our western swing. Right now, he's caught behind Jerry Sichting. I view Sam as still learning, but I like his street hustle out on the court.

Rick Carlisle. Rick's a smart all-around player who fills a role for our ballclub. He's caught in a situation where we have five guards. It's difficult to find time for every player.

Right now, we're preparing to go hard at anybody; that is, our concern is to have a basic understanding of who we are as a team, what our struggles are, and how we can utilize strategy to make our abilities win ballgames.

The Celtics play hard every night, from Preseason Game One through Game Seven of The Finals. So, recently, we rested the starters, DJ and Danny were injured, or sick, Robert, Kevin, and Larry were resting nagging season-long leg injuries. Our key people are badly needed for the playoffs; how they play from the beginning of the postseason could set us into the right winning rhythm.

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Supreme Court

By Tony Cooper

It is definitely not quiet on the Midwest Division front, as two of the NBA's more volatile coaches, Houston's **Bill Fitch** and Dallas' **Dick Motta** have squared off.

After watching the Rockets lose to Suns in Phoenix the other day, Motta said it appeared the Rockets were losing on purpose to avoid having to play the vaunted Lakers in the early rounds of the playoffs.

"Houston looks like they're messing around," Motta said in an interview with a Dallas newspaper. "They look like they're manipulating... It was about the most blatant I've ever seen. It wasn't even cute. It's a good thing he (Fitch) has a two-year extension. Thirty-seven (wins) isn't enough for most people to hold a job."

What upset Motta was with 8:31 left in the game and Houston down by six points, Center **Akeem Olajuwon** was pulled from the lineup and didn't play again. During the fourth quarter stretch, neither **Rodney McCray** nor **Ralph Sampson** could be found on the floor.

"The camera kept looking at the Three Stooges all together (on the bench)," Motta said. "They were happy. They were laughing."

Fitch, who used to boss the Celtics, wasn't laughing when he heard about Motta's comments.

"I don't know where he's coming from," Fitch said. "I really have no reason why (Motta would say such things). I'm sure the guy doesn't need to get his name in the paper, and one statement I honestly felt you guys misquoted him. Second of all, for a franchise that prides itself for its pride and prides itself as a class organization I'm surprised they allow him to make those statements."

"I think he was watching the game between beers. To me, Dick Motta, who I've always thought was a smart man, just did a dumb thing. There's no reason behind what he's saying. We don't want to play them (the Lakers) as good as they are."

Should Houston retain its status as the sixth-ranked team in the Western Conference playoffs, it would open against Portland. The winner would face either Seattle or the Mavericks.

"I don't know what they're doing—they're trying to do something," Motta said. "They don't want to be with LA, so they're coming down to our bracket. They've already succeeded in that. Now they've got to manipulate so Denver doesn't pass them. Then they've got to go to LA's bracket. They don't want to do that."

Fitch disagrees with Motta's theory. "It's awful easy for Dick to sit in a bar and watch the game. It's very frivolous for him to make a comment like that when all these facts are true. We've got a playoff situation clinched. I don't see any more manipulating than anyone else would do."

"I wouldn't care if we go into LA's bracket. To me it looks like someone is hitting the panic button—like all of a sudden we're aiming at Dallas. My druthers are that I don't want to play Dallas and LA. Those two teams are strong. Why should I go for them?"

And the NBA went after Motta and the Mavs suspending Motta for one game and



"Fat" Lever: Tough as Nails.

fining the team \$5,000 for the remarks. NBA vice president of operations **Rod Thorn** said an investigation showed there was no basis for Motta's claims.

You might ask why were the Mavericks fined and not Motta? The team is responsible for comments by executive employees.

MORE YAPPING: Veteran referee **Jack Madden** was fined for a disagreement with Atlanta Hawk president **Stan Kasten**. No word on how much money Madden had to ante up to the NBA coffers.

In the fourth quarter of a recent game, Kasten and Madden traded words at the press table.

"Do you think you look intelligent standing there shaking your head?" Madden said to Kasten, who had been silently disagreeing with a call. Madden had signaled Kasten to come over by the Hawk bench.

THE KING APPROACHETH: New York Knick forward **Bernard King** made his first NBA appearance in two years, against the Milwaukee Bucks in early April. It wasn't a great debut—King hit two of eight shots from the floor, had three shots blocked and scored seven points—but that didn't bother King.

"I wanted to win the game and play well (the Bucks won by 40), and that part didn't work out," King said. "But I'm happy to be

back and happy to be standing in front of a locker with my name on it again."

NO EXCESS FAT: The Denver Nuggets have had a disastrous season, but guard **Fat Lever** has become one of the most respected players in the league.

Although he's a spindly 6-3 guard belying his nickname Fat. His real name is Lafayette—(Fat comes from a younger brother, unable to pronounce Lafayette as a child), Lever lead the Nuggets in rebounding and is the NBA's top guard at plucking missed shots.

"He gets rebounds because he wants them, and he's not afraid to go in there with the big guys," Nugget coach **Doug Moe** said. "He's as tough as nails mentally."

Lever does much more than rebound. He scores, dishes out assists and plays a pretty good defensive game, too.

"No matter how bad he's playing offensively, it doesn't affect the other parts of his game one bit," Moe said. "A lot of players say it doesn't affect them, but it's not true. Players have a tendency to let down when shots aren't dropping, but Fat is the toughest competitor around. He just won't quit."

Lever is so revered by his teammates that when Nugget forward **Alex English** was named to the All-Star team, he wanted to relinquish his spot to Lever. The NBA disallowed that gesture.

"It's a shame he was overlooked by the

fans and coaches," English said. "No one in the NBA has been close to him in triple-doubles, which means he has played an outstanding all-around game for us. No other guard in the league has outperformed him."

Said Lever: "It showed a lot of character on the part of a teammate. But I wouldn't have wanted to take away something that he deserved. I told him my time would come."

Seems like Lever's time is already here.

BITS AND PIECES: The Warriors have clinched their first playoff spot in 10 years... Problems are brewing in Phoenix off the court as well, where a huge drug investigation was reported to include the Suns organization. But Commissioner **David Stern** said "We have been assured that the investigation does not involve gambling by anyone having any relationship to the NBA or any of its teams."... In early April, the Los Angeles Clippers found themselves 50 games behind the crosstown rival Lakers... The Utah Jazz won their 31st game at home recently, setting a club record... **Sugar Ray Richardson** is back in pro basketball, with the USBL's Long Island Knights. "I feel great," Richardson said. "I'm not worried about my talent or my age. **Sugar Ray Leonard** proved that the other night. Of course, it hurts being here (Richardson attended a Net-Washington game) when I know I should be out there."

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Eddie Gillyooly

Don't Give Up on Number 31.

Are there two Fred Roberts wearing number 31 for the Celtics? It certainly appears that way.

One week you'll see the guy wearing number 31 sporting a beard. The next week, there's a clean-shaven guy in the uniform.

One game number 31 is streaking to the basket for a sizzling fast break layup and then scurrying to the other end of the court for a defensive rebound. The next

game number 31 looks confused, clumsy and out of place.

Does number 31 play better with a beard or a close shave? Does number 31 play better as a starter, a sixth man, a seventh man or a DNP? It's all very confusing.

Just when it seems number 31 is getting untracked, he reverts into his lost soul posture on the court. Then when you give up on number 31, he comes back with a vengeance, outjumping his op-

ponent for rebounds and slashing to the basket for layups like an All-Pro.

Maybe the answer is that Fred Roberts has a twin and they are taking turns playing or non-playing for the Celtics. If that's the case, then the Celtics had better hire a private eye and find out which Fred Roberts has the Toni.

After a strong start, especially while filling in for the sidelined Larry Bird, it appeared the Celtics had come up with a real gem, a player who could provide quality minutes off the bench. A player who could minimize the loss of Scott Wedman.

Suddenly, Roberts lost his confidence, or at least that's the way it appeared and he became less effective on the court and soon the DNP's began to pile up. His problem was described as a slump and it was just a matter of time when he would regain his early season stature.

It didn't happen until he became a surprise replacement for Bird again and then Kevin McHale. It was the same number 31 who had sparked some early season victories. But the puzzle continues. One never knows which Fred Roberts is wearing number 31.

It's a real dilemma. Normally it takes players a long time to adjust to the style of a new team. Usually they start slow and improve as the season progresses and become familiar with the style and movements of their teammates. There are many adjustments to make.

But Fred Roberts' first season with the Celtics has been unlike the normal progression of players. He started off as though he had been with the team for years, then slumped, came back and then slumped.

There has been a lot of discussion during the season about the guy wearing number 31. Many theories have been offered. Some claim he has to improve his

concentration during the game. Others say he needs more minutes.

The most logical answer is that number 31 is not comfortable playing a half court game. He likes to run the fast break and plays his best in an up-tempo game.

That theory became evident when he filled in for an ailing McHale and the Celtics abandoned the low post game. Roberts flashed from one end of the court to the other, starting and finishing off fast breaks. He was outrunning his teammates as well as his opponents.

It makes sense. Roberts was more effective early in the season when the Celtics were fresh and running full court. But as the season progressed, the Celtics relied more and more on dumping the ball into McHale or Robert Parish.

That style of play takes Roberts out of the game. He's not familiar with the intricate cuts the players make to get open when McHale or Parish are double teamed.

Roberts is a runner who knows how to fill the lane but unfortunately the Celtics haven't been playing that style of basketball on a consistent basis. Whenever they do, however, Roberts is surrounded by the media after game trying to explain his sudden turnaround on the court.

There's no question about Roberts' talent. He's shown in several games this year that he can be an exciting player. He drives to the basket off the fast break as well as anyone. When they're playing his game, up beat, he can get his share of rebounds.

Defensively, he's not consistent but he has sparked in this phase of the game on more than one occasion. He's not a muscle man but he's not afraid of contact either.

The problem is that the Celtics, are much too efficient in the half court game—a style that minimizes Roberts' effectiveness. The five starters are fine tuned, having played together for several years and Roberts, as well as Darren Daye, is not always in synch when spelling one of them.

It takes time. Don't give up on number 31, beard or no beard.

NBA Announces Scholarship Winners

National Basketball Association Commissioner David J. Stern has announced the four national winners of the 1987 NBA Scholarship program, which awards a total of \$50,000 in college scholarships to high school seniors based on academic and extracurricular achievements, regardless of athletic ability.

The four national winners, who were awarded a \$1,000 scholarship, are Jonathan Farley of Brockport, New York; Shea Nicole Gardner of Bellingham, Washington; Kirsten Sword of Visalia, California and Esteban Torres of Miami, Florida.

The winners were chosen by a panel of judges comprised of Dave Anderson, sports columnist of *The New York Times*; Junior Bridgeman of the Milwaukee Bucks and president of the NBA Players Association; Julius Erving of the Philadelphia 76ers; Tom McMillen, formerly of the Washington Bullets and a Rhodes Scholar; Father Joseph Parkes, immediate past president, St. Peter's Prep, and Bruce Weber, publisher of *Scholastic Coach Magazine*.

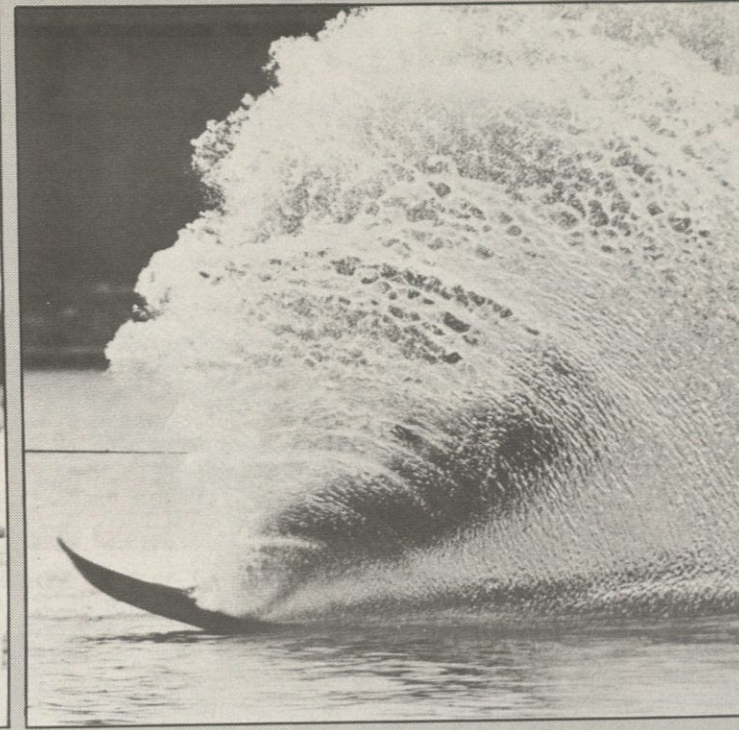
"Our four winners should take pride and satisfaction in the fact that they were selected from over 3,000 applications from students who had excellent credentials," said Stern. "They are leaders not only in the classroom, but in the community as well. We are pleased to be able to help them toward their goals."

The NBA Scholarship Program was initiated seven years ago to foster the NBA's commitment to higher education. Since its inception in 1980, over 350 students have received scholarship aid. The four national winners were chosen from those students residing outside a 75-mile radius of an NBA arena. In addition, each of the 23 teams offered a minimum of two \$1,000 scholarships to those students residing within the 75-mile radius. Applications were accompanied by a high school transcript through the junior year (including SAT or ACT scores), a letter of recommendation from a faculty member and an essay of up to 500 words on "The Importance of a College Education."

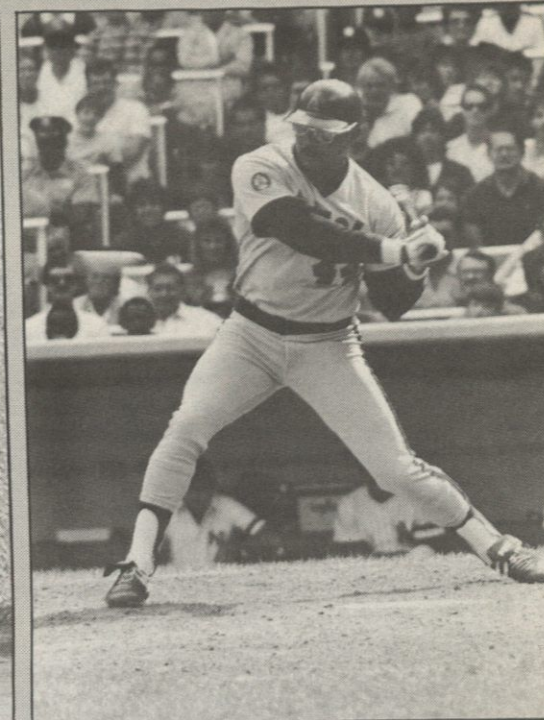
Kodak/Celtics Pride Photo Contest Winners



2nd: Tim Leary



1st: Tina Marie DeVincenzo



3rd: David Silverman

Picture above are the first, second and third place finishers in this month's **KODAK/CELTICS PRIDE** photo contest submitted to us by Tina Marie DeVincenzo of Bridgeport, CT; Tim Leary of Durham, NH; and David Silverman of Providence, RI, respectively.

As first place finisher, Ms. DeVincenzo has won the opportunity to sit courtside and photograph the World

Champion Boston Celtics in action. In addition, Ms. DeVincenzo has won the following exciting prizes:

- a Kodak K-12 35mm camera.
- "Season of the Shooting Stars," the 1985-86 Celtics Video Yearbook.
- a personally autographed color-photo enlargement of her favorite Celtic.

• a complimentary year-long subscription to **CELTICS PRIDE**.

• Kodak 35mm film.

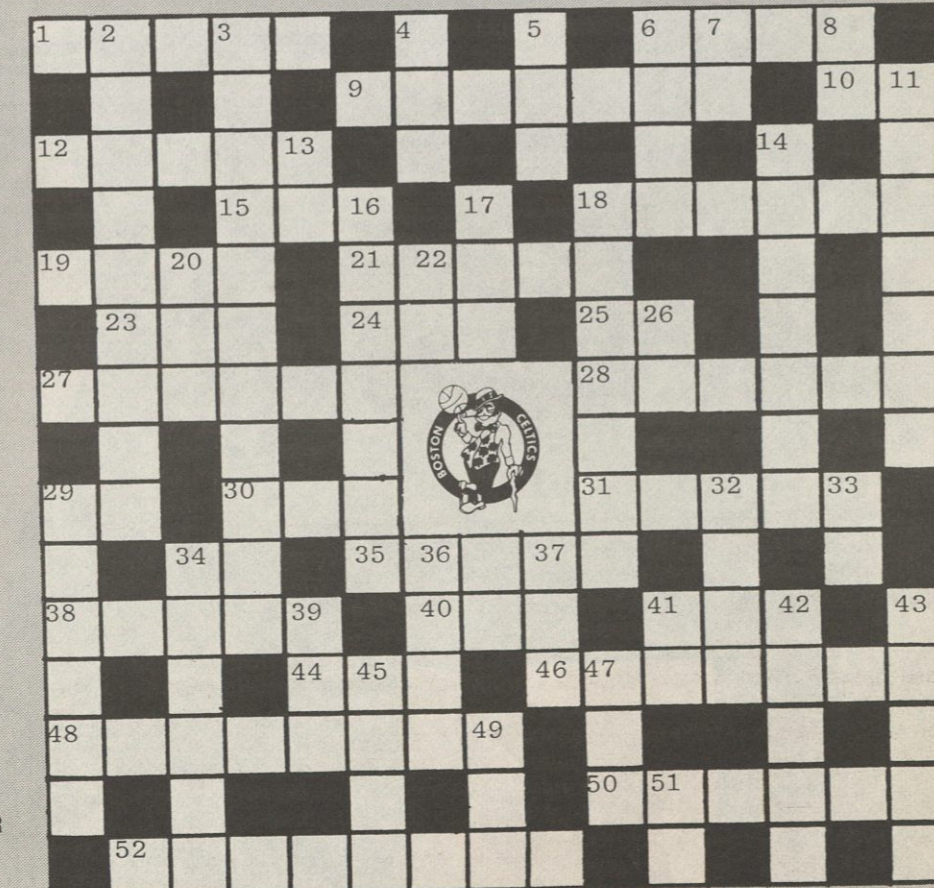
As second and third place finishers, Tim Leary and David Silverman will receive the color photo enlargement, video yearbook, subscription to **CELTICS PRIDE** and Kodak film.

Boston Celtics Crossword Puzzle

CLUES

- Another word for the CELTICS
- DARREN _____
- Governor of Massachusetts
- Law prosecutor initials
- Players quickness
- Do it _____
- Player's footwear
- Squad
- Subscribe to **CELTICS PRIDE**
- Don't miss another _____
- Mischievous
- Head shake
- Negative reply word
- Celtics fans live in this Mass. town
- If not dressed properly in cold weather, you have a tendency to do this.
- _____ and out
- What players do up and down the basketball court?
- Musical
- _____ carefull!
- A former Celtic: SIHUGO _____
- Applause
- MICHAEL "_____ " JORDAN
- Feminine title
- River boat paddle
- NBA Game
- A former Celtic: HORACE _____
- Celtic fans live in this Connecticut town also.
- Famous boxer
- _____ team
- Number of clubs in the NBA
- Give honor to whom honor is _____
- _____ telephone
- When taking a bad spill, a player may do this act.
- _____ you were!
- A former Celtic: _____ SADOWSKI
- Questions and _____
- _____ it yourself!
- Celtic fans live in this Massachusetts town.
- Team continuance in victories
- Drug
- Mental strain
- Sick
- _____ what?
- Exclamation
- _____ tax
- Hearing organs
- GREEN of the Lakers
- A former Celtic: MOE _____
- Uncooked meat
- Period
- Former Celtic: _____ BONHAM
- A former Celtic: CARR
- Resting seat
- A former Celtic: _____ WALKER
- Opposed
- Scott Wedman's zodiac
- Japanese coin
- Xavier University

By Robert L. Jackson, Jr.



Solution on Page 23.

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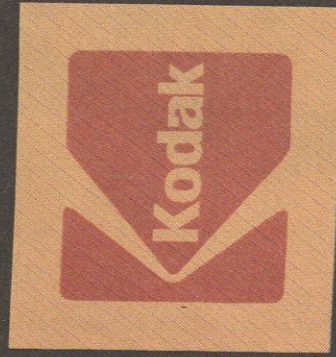
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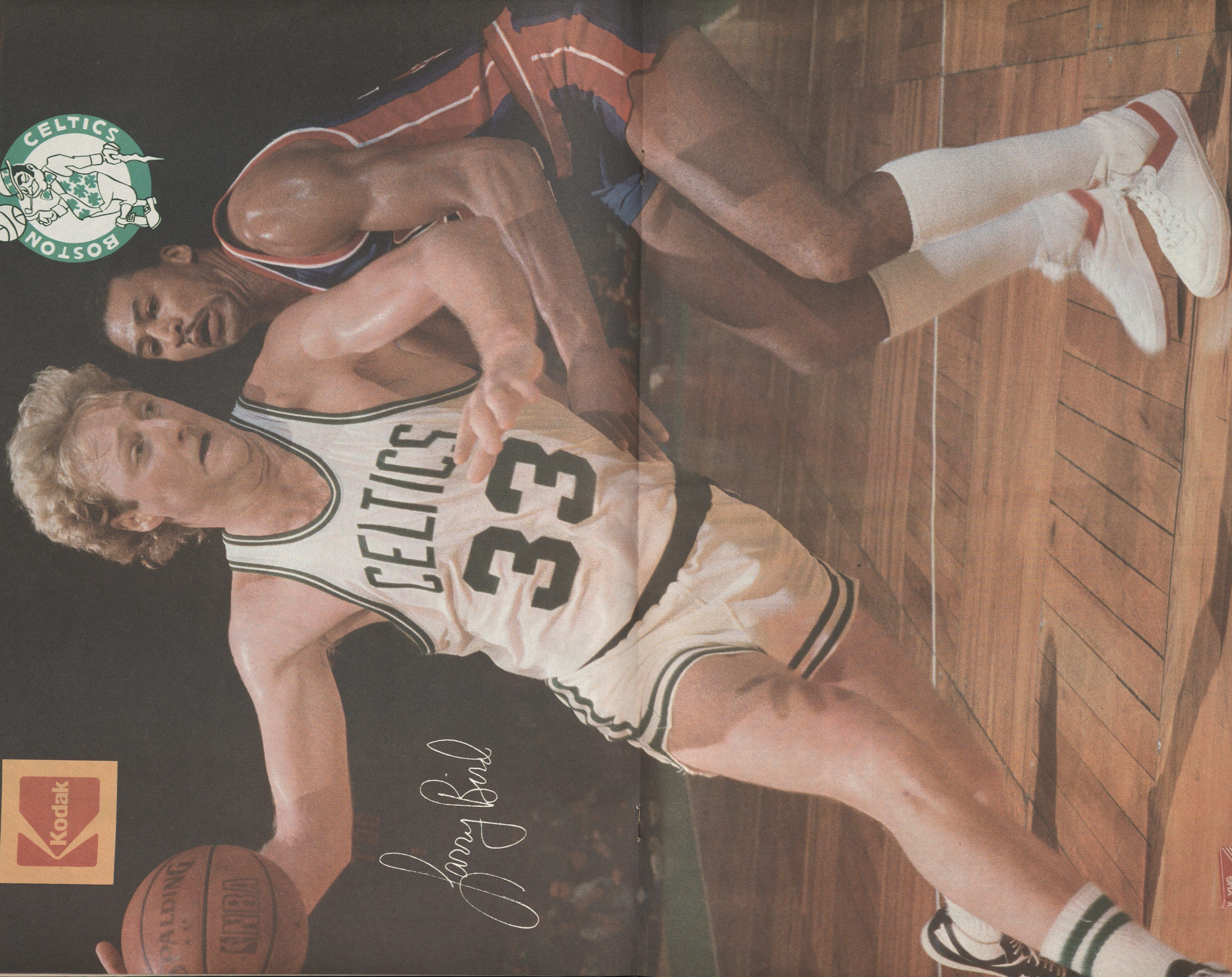
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Larry Bird

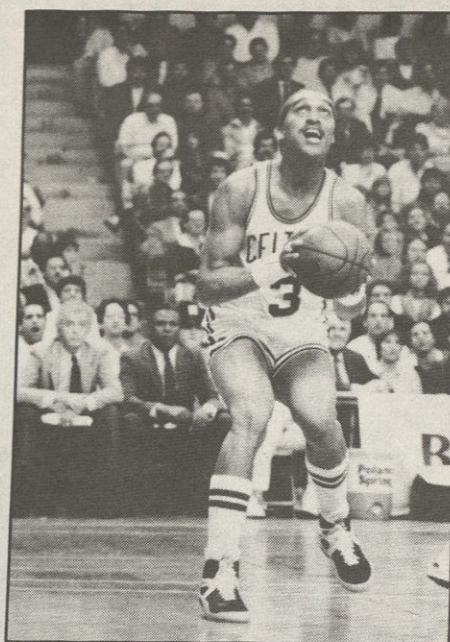


Celtics Confidential

By Bob Schron

Practice Sessions. The Grateful Dead, friends of Bill Walton were in New England to play a pair of concerts, and were guests of the Celtic's backup center at practices April 4 & 5... **K.C. Jones**, affable (His wife, Ellen Thomas Jones and their son, Christopher were also attendees at a Saturday practice) toward the highly respected blues/jazz group, nevertheless was concerned about his team... K.C. has been gradually adding plays to the team's offense, urging patience on the team's offensive play execution. But as the regular season was winding to a finish with games this weekend against Chicago and Atlanta at the Garden, the Celtics were struggling. And when the offense isn't functioning, the opposing team has matters their own way with their offense... "When you play an (Eastern Conference) team five or six times a year," said **Larry Bird**, "You have to keep improving your offense and be selective in showing them what you can do."... **Dennis Johnson** missed a practice because of a recurring shoulder problem after backcourt mate **Danny Ainge** missed two sessions because of the flu... Ainge left in the fourth quarter of the April 3rd OT win over Detroit, vomiting in the locker room, but returned to play well against **Isiah Thomas** as that contest entered its climax.

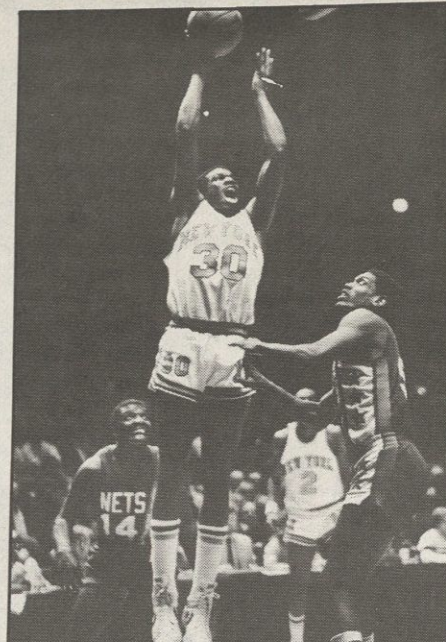
Jay Vincent, of the Bullets and brother of Celtic **Sam Vincent** went to dinner with his brother after the teams played in Boston, April 1... Jay thinks Sam can still be an impact player in Boston... As Detroit and Atlanta battled to win the Central Division, Celtic Assistant Director of Public Relations **David Zuccaro** gave



Dennis Johnson: Shoulder Problems.

an informal play-by-play account of the C's-Det. OT April 3 to WGST in Atlanta... The Boston Herald did a feature on Celtics Equipment Manager, **Wayne Lebeaux**... Sarah and Duane Johnson, (Duane is the Director of Sales in the Celtic office,) are the proud parents of Kyle Gregory, 7 pounds, 6 ounces, born to the couple on March 26. Best to these fine people.

Kevin Stacom and **Dave Cowens** were on hand recently as the Celtics played Washington and Detroit in the Garden... Cowens was honored at the half for his contributions to the team as a player, from 1971-80... Stacom on why the Celtics players seem to have the ability to play well in important games regardless

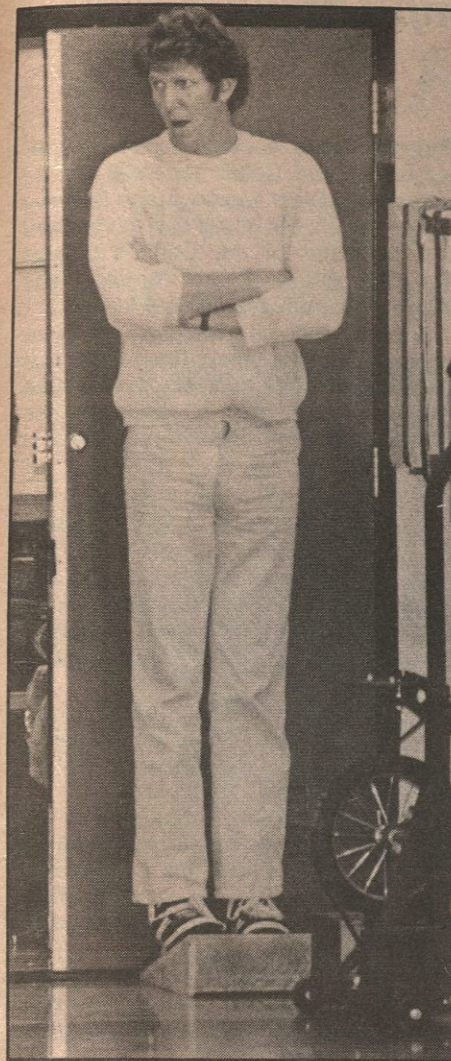


Bernard King: Coming Back.

of (championship) era: "I think that the success of the Celtics is the result of hard work. When you make that commitment all season, I think it follows that you play well in important games... **Larry Bird's** jersey and a Celtics autographed basketball were valuable items auctioned off at Brandeis University Annual Charity auction... April 4... **Red Auerbach** was featured on CBS' *At the Half* feature when that special topics program profiled Red and Nuggets' **Alex English** in their involvement with the motion picture "Amazing Grace and Chuck"... **Tom Sanders** is to speak at the Watertown Chamber of Commerce, April 21... **Bill Cunningham**, former 76er Coach and now a television commentator (as well as being involved with a possible expansion team in Miami) was asked by **Bob Costas** to name an all-time, all-star team. Cunningham included **Bill Russell** among his centers (**Kareem Abdul-Jabbar** and Cunningham's friend, **Wilt Chamberlain** were the other pivots). **Jerry West** and **Oscar Robertson** were the guards, and his former player, **Julius Erving** was one of the forwards, with **Larry Bird** completing the team... Billy C on Bird's inclusion: "A lock," said the former C's coaching antagonist, who with this description, singled out Bird as his only sure choice... **Red Auerbach** was in New Orleans to see the Final Four... Red and **Jimmy Rodgers**, Team Director of Player Personnel, were in Portsmouth to scout that annual tournament... The team with the most victories in the Boston Garden since 1979-80, Bird's first season in Boston is the Washington Bullets, with seven... **Brian McIntyre**, Director of Public Relations of the NBA, was in Boston last week to verify hotel accommodations in The Hub for the playoffs... Auerbach on a vital criterion for a Celtics draft choice: "The young player must be willing to accept limited playing time... **Tom Sarandis**, a local radio personality, also was in New Orleans for the Final Four... The Syracuse grad was still recovering, but reported strong performances from **David Robinson** of Navy (the John Wooden Award winner) and **Horace Grant** of Clemson in a Sunday

afternoon Coaches All-Star Game... Former Boston TV personality **Jimmy Meyers** was in town last week; Meyers, a friend of **Nate Archibald** thinks the former Celtic All-Star has a legitimate chance to be a coach at a major college program soon. He counters the argument centering on Archibald's lack of head coaching experience: "But Tiny is an excellent recruiter—and look at some of the coaches working right now!"... Good Point... **Chris Ford** was taking hands-on coaching to the practice floor, scrimmaging one-on-one with "pet project" **Conner Henry** frequently as the regular season entered its final stages. Ford, of course, is one of K.C. Jones' Assistant Coaches... With the conclusion of the major college season, **Ed Badger** moves back to the pros... Badger will scout one series ahead of the team as it progresses through the postseason... **Joe Fitzgerald** interviewed **Tom Heinsohn** on the Celtics thirty year reunion, held last week at the Sheraton in Boston... "Three factors kept us together," commented Heinsohn. "Winning championships, Red Auerbach, and the fraternal feeling which comes to exist among a group of men." **Tom Sanders**, another veteran dynasty player, told Fitzgerald of the Herald: "At Red Auerbach's weekend in 1985, the 'old-timers' at first didn't know what to say. But when we got into the locker room again, the language of the old days returned and you felt the bond again."

The *Christian Science Monitor* featured **Robert Parish** in a front page story... **Jimmy Rodgers** analyzed the Indiana 74-73 win over Syracuse: "It wasn't a classic Indiana win, since **Keith Smart** (who scored the winning basket and the important points leading up to the game-winner) is a junior college import. But Indiana seemed to pull it out partially because of tournament and coaching experience. They had the presence of mind to take a quick foul toward the end, to wind the clock down for the last shot. Intangibles mean the difference between winning and losing; Syracuse played well enough to win"... **Auerbach** on the woes of the New York Knicks: "I honestly think they need **Bernard King's** superstar caliber play to set their team back in motion. They need him to come back in order for them to turn around... Celtics Vice-President of Marketing and Communications, **Tod Rosensweig** was in Las Vegas last week while the team was out of town to take in **Sugar Ray Leonard's** historic win over Brocton's **Marvin Hagler**... Jordan Marsh in Boston is opening a Celtics wing in their downtown store on April 19th. Appearing were **Johnny Most**, **M.L. Carr**, **Dennis Johnson**, and **Danny Ainge**. The Hawks, who play the Celtics Sunday, had **Spud Webb** and **Dominique Wilkins** there... **Calvin Murphy**, former Houston Rocket, had an appearance at halftime of the Celtics game against the Hawks, giving a baton exhibition and basketball demonstration... **Tommy Heinsohn** hosted a show of his paintings in Bedford, New Hampshire at Silver Brothers, which is a new Miller Distributor... **K.C. Jones** was honored in two separate ceremonies by the Shriners and by the Boy Scouts of Massachusetts.



Bill Walton: Cautiously Optimistic.

It was an ordeal; Bill Walton was attempting to make his way to the Celtics locker room at Hellenic College where the team practices. Once more, there was pain in his right ankle. After returning to the Celtics lineup for the first time this season against Phoenix March 11th and playing six good games, Walton had felt pain in his ankle again while practicing before the March 31st game against the Knicks. He played three minutes in that game but he hasn't played since.

On his way to the locker room, Gary Gillis of WNEV-TV in Boston caught up with the C's reserve center, winner of the Sixth Man of the Year last season. The lights for the TV camera beamed on, Walton drew a breath, and proceeded with the interview. Bill Walton is a star of magnitude who enjoys limelight; he doesn't want the negative feelings that have too often accompanied his injuries through the years.

"I'm not pessimistic," he told Gillis. "It's a day-to-day situation."

That was three weeks ago; at that time K.C. Jones talked hopefully of having Walton back in a few games. But last week, his tone was different.

"We all feel bad for Bill because of how hard he's tried (to come back) and how much he wants to play."

"But we can't count on him. If we did, we wouldn't be where we are today (with the best record in the Eastern Conference as the season headed into its final week)."

The Celtics' Trainer Ray Melchiorre stated "Bill himself thought he should rest it and he's certainly not the player we'd force to play. One reason we're cautiously optimistic is that the pain is acute as opposed to chronic." This was said by the C's trainer during the time immediately after the injury had flared up again.

Bill Walton's Struggle To Return A Warrior Down

As plans remain, the Celtics cannot go into the postseason with the idea that Walton will be a major contributor.

"The problem with timing, conditioning, and fitting back into synch with his teammates is a major issue at this point," offered Tommy Heinsohn, the team's former coach and now a television analyst

for Sportschannel and CBS. For the record, Walton wasn't making any predictions.

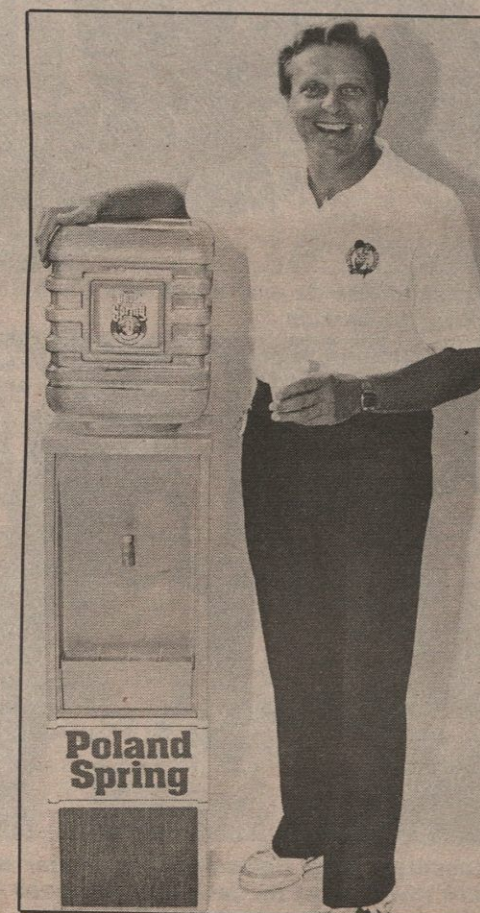
There was a scene from a long time ago before Playoff Game Number Two against Seattle when Walton was the king of the mountain of the league, in 1979. He was then playing with a foot so painful it was

later diagnosed to be broken. Yet he played that night. During the day of the game which was played that night, a friend drove Walton to a bank. The foot was so painful that the friend had to drive up on the sidewalk so Walton would have limited steps to make. Yet he went out and played that night. (The foot subsequently shattered.) He's not been the same physically since.

Last week he told a photographer, "I feel I could go out and play for an hour."

"But then I don't think I'd be able to walk for three months."

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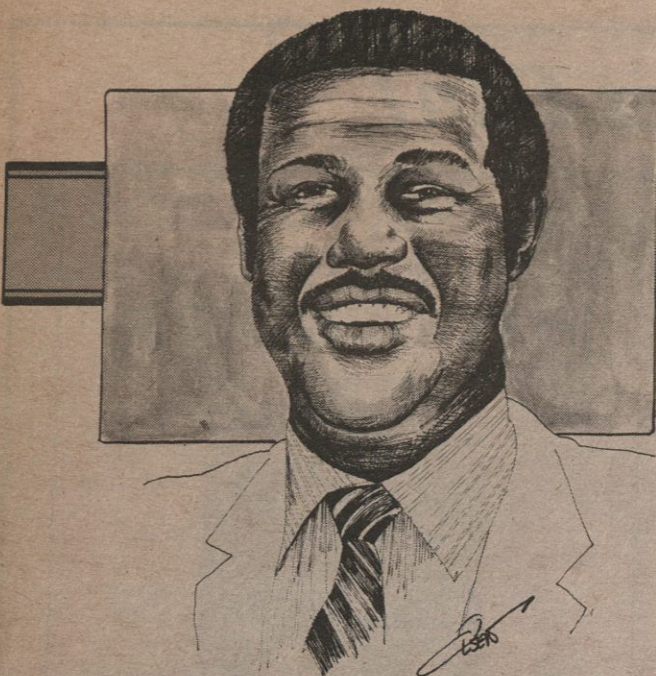
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M.L. Carr

Struggle

The Celtics struggled through a difficult time on the road again last week. If the team loses anymore in a foreign arena, I'm advising K.C. Jones to pack white uniforms and play the games in those jerseys.

The regular season headed into its final week and the Celtics were going through some hard times. These happen during a long season and teams just have to face

them: struggles on a team level translate into different things. Players begin to question every facet of the game. You have questions about the rotations. You think about your practice habits. Worry about nagging injuries—will they heal? Situations like that add up to trouble and at this time of the year, you don't want to question anything. I read a quote by K.C. earlier last week saying he's prepared to go to war with what he has and I believe that's the right attitude. With this team, if you have five guys out there and you've accepted it, you can win. K.C.'s starting to



K.C. Jones: Deserves an Ovation.

send the message out that he believes the team can win. Obviously it's necessary to get the team playing effectively again.

I think in the playoffs the team rises physically and mentally because you have to. It's that simple. Games at this time of the year, for the teams who have their positions locked in, may sometimes be misleading. It can work two ways: Teams have risen during the final month of the year and taken that momentum into the playoffs. Or teams have paced themselves and played well in the postseason, benefiting from the rest time in games that have no real import. In the playoffs, each game is a 48-minute test. That's true in the regular season but it's even truer when teams' seasons are on the line in the postseason.

I think that in the playoffs the Celtics sternest test will come in the Eastern Conference and this season, it's vital that the team stay focused on each series, one after another. This conference is particularly tough this year: You don't want to tangle with Washington with Moses Malone for too many games because they wear you down. Philadelphia is the same. From time to time they will cause major problems for the Celtics. There's a parity

of nice talent in the league this year and I think Atlanta rises above that. I have respect for that team. People talk about young kids but they're more than that. Dominique Wilkins is a veteran now and he's a bonafide superstar. Doc Rivers is an excellent point guard and Kevin Willis is another player you have to respect. But no matter who the Celtics play, they have to take care of business back here in the East before worrying about the Lakers. As time passes, we will talk about this Celtic west coast foe, however.

This weekend the Celtics play the Bulls and the Hawks with the latter game the final game of the home season. There has been much discussion about the perils of the team turning it on and off at this stage of the year but that's not what I see about this team at all. When I look at this season's Celtics, I see a courageous unit who has had a superb season. Without their nucleus off the bench, Bill Walton and Scott Wedman and starting the season without Danny Ainge, they were 21-9 as the New Year began, 5 games in first place. With Larry Bird struggling physically, the Celtics hit the All-Star break, 34-12 with a 6½ game lead. Then they pulled it together for the regular season on the West Coast and essentially got the race under control as they headed into the final month of the season. If injuries to Kevin McHale, Robert Parish, and Dennis Johnson have made the team waver in the final few weeks, well, these are men, not superhumans.

Dennis Johnson is one player the team cannot afford to miss. He is the stable force on this team. He is the general.

As we play the final game of the year, what I would like to see ideally is for the Celtics fans to go wild in support of the team. As the Celtics head into the playoffs, they have to have the right intensity from the beginning of the postseason. Heading into the playoffs, it's needed for them to be reminded how well they have responded to the challenges this tumultuous season has set up. I think the team deserves the praise of this city for the way the Celtics have hung together through adversity. For the playoffs, they will have to have their legs and minds right; from the regular season, through the struggles there, the team has built up determination and you do get strong through struggle. You often hear that teams who "have a mission" are the teams who succeed and win NBA championships. The Celtics group belief could be: we deserve it. And they're still going to win it, I believe, and repeat for the first time since 1969.

For this, I make my annual plea: K.C. Jones for Coach of the Year. I've been close to the team and I've watched the last two months of the season be a coach's nightmare. Because before every game there is a different player on the training table. Without key people able to perform, efficient play is nearly impossible. yet, there isn't an attitude problem and the team has continued to win. K.C. has spotted players brilliantly, and has the team enthused in the middle of conditions of struggle.

I think K.C., the coaching staff and the Celtics players and organization deserve an ovation.

By the Numbers

The Celtics suffered through a slump as the regular season headed into its final week. Boston went 2-4 through the Knicks game at the Garden Sunday. Comparisons between the 1982-83 season and the present season are inevitable; in the former season, after the Celtics won three straight games to improve their record to 43-15 in March of 1983, they finished the year 13-11, including a conclusion of 4-7 on the road. This season: after winning vs. Portland at home in late February, a come-from-behind game, improving their record to 42-14, also a third straight win, Boston has gone 13-9, including 1-9 on the road. In both seasons, the Celtics were trailing a team which couldn't be caught for the best record in the league, Philadelphia and the Moses ("Four! Four! Four!") Malone team of 1982-83 and this season, the Los Angeles Lakers.

Danny Ainge. K.C. Jones illustrated his

late season strategy with Danny Ainge. The off-guard played through the flu vs. Detroit (32 minutes off the bench, 8 assists, a 3-pt FG) and then was left home when the team played in Philadelphia. Best effort was at New York when DJ was out with sore shoulder: 21 points, 13 assists, 5 rebounds in 44 minutes. Rallied team late at New Jersey: 32 points, 3 3-pt FG, 2 steals.

Larry Bird. Bird continues to peak for the postseason, statistically highlighted by his triple-double by halftime against the Bulls: at the half, 17 points, 11 assists, 10 rebounds, and finishing with 30 points, 17 rebounds, 15 assists. Also had three blocks in that game. Thirty-one points, 8 assists against Detroit before fouling out followed by 39 points, 12 assists, 10 rebounds at Philadelphia, 26 points, 12 rebounds at Cleveland, 26 points, 7 rebounds against New Jersey. Mar. Stats: 29.7 ppg, .56 FG%, 9.8 rpg, 8.3 assists.

Rick Carlisle. Placed on IR with strained back March 30. 10+ mins 11 times, 20+ mins 3 times with 10+ points once. Missed three games in January with flu. Last extended action came at Atlanta, Feb. 27.

Darren Daye. Daye appears to have won the Scott Wedman position as first small forward off the bench. 24 minutes at New York, 11 points, 3 rebs, 2 assists. Sparked team vs. Washington, his old team ("Always an incentive"—Daye) with 9 points, 7 rebs, 3 assists in 26 minutes. Best effort on the road was 7 point, 3 reb, 3 assist effort at New Jersey last Friday. Daye's willingness to play defense, hustle and team attitude help.

Conner Henry. Played meaningful minutes while first Johnson and then Ainge were sidelined with ailments. Three rebounds and 1-2 FTs at New York; in garbage time, 2-2 FGs in 1 minute vs. Washington. Strongest appearance was at Philadelphia in OT defeat: 18 minutes, 4 points, 2 rebounds, 1 assist. Despite expected erratic streaks from a rookie learning his second team's system, Henry is a positive addition to this team this season.

Greg Kite. Kite's best regular season effort since shacking Warriors' rebounder Larry Smith in '85-'86 came last Friday against Nets, when he started in Robert Parish's absence: 34 minutes, 9 points, 9 rebounds (4 offensive), 2 blocks, 2 steals. 3 points, 2 rebounds at Philadelphia; 3 offensive rebounds and 2 points against Detroit, 2 points, 1 rebound, 1 block at New York.

Kevin McHale. The 1986-87 lowly Nets; contribution to the Celts' season: they provided a hint to future playoff teams' strategy vs. the great McHale, surrounding the Minnesota with four players in the post. In that game, Kevin had 23 points, 11 rebounds, 3 blocks. Before this, McHale sat out two games with sore right foot, returning to the lineup vs. DT: 25 points, 10 rebs, 4 assists, 3 blocks and vs. Sixers, 29 points, 6 rebs. Stats aside to state the obvious: at various times this season, McHale and Bird have been the best forward in the league. For the C's to repeat, both men must play together at that dominant level in every series the C's play.

Robert Parish. The Noble One finally had to miss two games late last week because of his recurring right elbow problem. Twenty-two points, 7 rebounds at NY; 18 points, 7 rebs vs. WA; and the critical points vs. Detroit, finishing with 15 points, 6 rebounds, 3 blocks in 45 minutes

of that OT contest. Parish's elbow began plaguing him at The Spectrum when he shot 4-13 for 9 points with 8 rebs and 2 blocked shots. With Walton uncertain as of last week, people may look back on this period when K.C. rested Parish as a key move, especially if Parish must tackle the critical minutes against Abdul-Jabbar or Donaldson.

Fred Roberts. Season high FGA against New York when he scored 22 on 9-17 shooting in 31 minutes—season high minutes was 37 vs. Philadelphia December 5th. NY game was a start, as was the following night vs. WA, a 10-point, 4-rebound, 1-steal game. McHale returned vs. DT and Roberts' minutes fell back to 9, 2 points. Then a 2-min game against Philadelphia, and a start against Cavs with Parish out of the lineup and McHale at Center. Twenty-four minutes, 4 points, 4 rebounds, and assist.

Dennis Johnson. DJ missed three games with sore right shoulder and the Point Guard proved by his absence the team isn't the same without him. Returned vs. WA off bench, 4-7 FGS, 8 points with 2 assists. Johnson and Bird repeatedly burned Pistons in Johnson's 24 point, 6 assist game in OT. At Philadelphia, Johnson attempted only 9 shots. M.L. Carr thinks Johnson is too unselfish—but he had 11 assists. Vs. Nets and Cavs, attempted 11 and 10 shots.

Jerry Sichting. Second start in Johnson's absence vs. NY 9 point, 4 rebound, 3 assist effort in 40 minutes. With DJ back and coming off the bench, Sichting shot superbly adding 14 to the team in 28 minutes. Then started ensuing two contests when Ainge turned up with flu: 10 points on 5-7 FGs with 3 assists vs. DT and 8 points in 35 minutes at Philadelphia. Injured right shoulder against Nets, limiting playing time in that game to 12 minutes.

Sam Vincent. Vincent has again begun to receive playing time recently. Six points in 15 minutes at Philadelphia with 2 rebounds, 1 assist and 1 steal. Six points and assist in 8 minutes in garbage time at Cleveland and 5 points in 6 minutes at New Jersey. He seems to have the offensive spark this team could use but it is conceivable that it's too late for this season.

Bill Walton. Day to day, but the Red-head's foot hurts him. Hasn't played since three minute effort against the Knicks, Mar. 15th. Yet, despite current pain, the player himself expects to be busy throughout June so it would be premature to count him out of the postseason.

Solution to Celtics Puzzle

C	E	L	T	S	D	P	K	A	D	A	Y	E
X	W	D	U	K	A	K	I	S	D	A	N	
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Top Performances March 31-April 10

POINTS	
Larry Bird	39 at New York, March 31
Larry Bird	39 at Philadelphia OT, April 5
Danny Ainge	32 at New Jersey, April 10
Larry Bird	31 vs. Detroit OT, April 3
Larry Bird	30 vs. Washington, April 1
Kevin McHale	29 at Philadelphia OT, April 5

REBOUNDS	
Larry Bird	17 vs. Washington, April 1
Larry Bird	12 at Cleveland, April 7
Kevin McHale	11 at Cleveland, April 7
Kevin McHale	10 vs. Detroit OT, April 3
Larry Bird	10 at Philadelphia OT, April 5
Kevin McHale	10 at New Jersey, April 10

ASSISTS	
Larry Bird	15 vs. Washington, April 1
Danny Ainge	13 at New York, March 31
Larry Bird	12 at Philadelphia, April 5
Dennis Johnson	11 at Philadelphia, April 5

BLOCKED SHOTS	
Larry Bird	3 vs. Washington, April 1
Robert Parish	3 vs. Detroit OT, April 3
Kevin McHale	3 vs. Detroit OT, April 3
Kevin McHale	3 at Cleveland, April 7

STEALS	
Larry Bird	3 at New York, March 31
Larry Bird	3 at New Jersey, April 10
Dennis Johnson	2 vs. Washington, April 1
Darren Daye	2 vs. Washington, April 1
Dennis Johnson	2 at Philadelphia OT, April 5
Jerry Sichting	2 at Philadelphia OT, April 5
Greg Kite	2 at New Jersey, April 10
Danny Ainge	2 at New Jersey, April 10

WON 56, LOST 23

Boston Celtics Statistics

THROUGH SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 1987

PLAYER	G	GS	MIN	-FIELD GOALS-			-3-PT FG-		-FREE THROWS-			-REBOUNDS-											
				FG	FGA	PG%	FG	FGA	FT	FTA	FT%	OFF	DEF	TOT	AST	PF	DQ	STL	TO	BLK	PTS	AVG	H1
BIRD	71	70	2672	745	1426	52.2	66	216	399	440	90.7	118	539	657	342	176	3	190	231	67	1975	27.8	47
MCMALE	75	75	2974	774	1277	60.6	0	4	420	500	84.0	236	497	735	195	235	1	38	193	170	1668	26.2	37
PARISH	77	77	2867	566	1013	55.9	0	1	219	293	74.7	244	563	809	167	255	5	68	183	140	1351	17.5	34
AINGE	68	63	2590	395	806	49.0	62	187	142	159	89.3	48	183	233	367	185	3	92	139	14	1014	14.9	35
JOHNSON	76	75	2826	402	917	43.7	442	7	62	203	244	832	41	206	249	579	176	61	81	37	1050	13.8	47
SICHTING	75	15	1509	197	368	53.6	7	26	37	42	88.1	22	28	70	182	117	0	38	59	5	436	5.8	23
ROBERTS	71	11	1049	131	298	50.8	0	3	120	148	81.1	50	133	187	61	124	1	21	68	20	362	5.1	23
DAYE (TOT)	39	1	695	96	195	49.2	0	0	34	65	52.3	35	35	120	73	93	0	24	54	7	226	3.8	14
DAYE (BOS)	38	1	688	96	195	49.2	0	0	34	65	52.3	35	35	119	72	91	0	24	53	7	226	3.9	14
VINCENT	44	5	364	56	129	43.8	0	0	47	91	51.7	5	21	26	56	33	0	13	32	1	159	3.6	10
WEDMAN	6	2	78	9	27	33.3	1	2	1	2	50.0	3	6	9	6	0	0	0	1	159	3	6	10
WALTON	7	0	73	6	15	40.0	0	0	8	11	72.7	5	14	19	5	18	0	1	11	8	9	2	30
HENRY (TOT)	33	0	321	46	136	33.8	13	42	17	27	63.0	7	27	34	33	33	0	9	26	1	122	2.3	12
HENRY (BOS)	32	0	229	38	103	36.9	12	31	10	17	58.8	7	20	27	25	26	0	6	17	1	98	2.8	12
CARLISLE	42	0	297	30	92	32.6	5	16	15	20	75.0	8	20	30	35	28	0	8	25	0	80	1.9	10
KITE	73	1	742	47	110	42.7	0	1	29	76	38.2	61	108	189	27	148	2	17	34	46	123	1.7	10
CELTS	79		19085	3507	6784	51.7	260	551	1289	2064	81.0	891	2469	3340	2336	1651	15	541	1264	514	8903	112.7	135
OPPONENTS	79		19085	3350	7252	46.2	119	397	1378	2083	75.7	1206	2206	3412	1983	1642	13	703	1115	327	8395	106.3	138

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Game by Game

Boston 103 Washington 86 April 1, at Boston Garden

Kevin Loughery, Coach of the Bullets, had seen scenes like this before. He had coached Michael Jordan in Chicago, when that young player was so effective that Kevin compared him to Jerry West. Larry Bird had impressed Loughery before—but this was different. The veteran Bullets Coach, having his best NBA coaching season, sat among reporters and talked about Larry Bird.

He was referring to the three-time MVP winner who this night had led the Celtics to a 103-86 win by registering a triple double. By halftime, at the intermission, Bird had 17 points, 11 assists, and 10 rebounds. At game's end (after the Celtics had run away, limiting the Hoosier's scoring attempts), Bird had 30 points, 17 rebounds, and 15 assists. "This was something special," Loughery said. "It has to be reflected in the stats, and I don't typically regard them as important, but tonight they were. Everything he did tonight was the right play. Shooting, passing, defense. The game cannot be played any better."

With this, the Celtics still needed some strong play off the bench from Darren Daye. The Celtics pulled away from a 65-64 3rd period lead behind the quintet of Daye-Bird-Dennis Johnson-Robert Parish-and Danny Ainge. This group outplayed the Bullets' starters and drew the lead out

Boston 119 Detroit 115 April 3, at Boston Garden Overtime

In a stirring comeback, without, in the end Larry Bird, the Celtics won an important game this season when they defeated the Detroit Pistons in overtime in

the Garden. Boston faced a foe which had routed a playoff team (Indiana) by a team-record 46 points the night before and still seemed to be running. Asked later if the game had playoff implications, i.e., if the Pistons needed to win for confidence against the Celtics if the teams should meet in the playoffs, Chuck Daly, Pistons' Coach, said "No. The importance to us was winning the Central Division title over Atlanta. We had more immediate concerns than Boston."

Philadelphia 106 Boston 104 April 5, at The Spectrum Overtime

The Celtics' road woes continued as the Philadelphia 76ers, behind the 28-point 18-rebound performance of Charles Barkley, outlasted Boston in overtime. Boston was led by Larry Bird (a triple double, 39 points, 12 assists, 11 rebounds) and Kevin McHale (29), but both All-Stars were forced into misses which could have saved the victory for the Celtics.

These misfires came late, but Boston created their defeat early, seeing the fast-breaking nemeses from the Quaker City run off to an early 13 point lead on their way to a 33-24 advantage after one. It was up hill from then, highlighted by (a) a fight between Greg Kite and the boundful Barkley (b) first fine and then desultory work from the Green Team in the 2nd and 4th quarters respectively and (c) the continued excellence of Bird. After the Celts fell behind early in the 4th quarter as the Green Team had problems, the Celtics starters (playing without flu-ridden Danny Ainge) fought their way back to a position of control at 94-90 at the three minute mark. But they failed to hold on as the home team rallied behind Barkley, Cliff

Robinson, and Tim McCormick. A superb triple-team of Andrew Toney by Dennis, Robert Parish, and Darren Daye forced the OT from the Celtics' defensive end at 99. It was the second straight OT game for Boston.

Cleveland 107 Boston 83 April 7, at the Richfield Coliseum

The Cleveland Cavs broke open a close game to defeat the Celtics behind rookies Ron Harper and Brad Daugherty. For the Celtics, coming on the heels of an overtime loss in Philadelphia Sunday, the game marked the eighth loss in the team's last nine contests. Boston played without Robert Parish who sat on the bench in street clothes resting his injured right elbow. Parish shot 4-13 Sunday when he felt a tightness in the elbow before the game against the 76ers.

Cleveland led this game early, running off to a 14-7 lead and the Celtics were forced to play from behind much of the way. Larry Bird scored 18 of his Celtic game-high 30 points in the first half to generate offense for the Celtics; Kevin McHale started the game at Center and seemed to need his familiar low-post position to fit in with the offense. While the Celts struggled with their alignment, their defense slipped, and the Cavs stayed in the game with the favored defending champions.

The teams played evenly after the half. Cleveland was paced in the 3rd quarter by Harper, who keyed a running game which took off unexpectedly after the Celtics forged a 69-68 lead with 4:38 remaining in the 3rd period. At that juncture, Lenny Wilkens, Coach of the Cavs, called a timeout; The Cavs subsequently exploded, reeling off a 31-8 streak.

New Jersey 117 Boston 108 April 10, at Meadowlands Arena

Boston saw a 49-36 second quarter lead dissipate as the New Jersey Nets upended the defending champs, playing without Robert Parish. Parish missed his second straight game with an injured right elbow. The Nets, however, played most of the game without their star, power forward Buck Williams. Williams was ejected by referee Billy Oakes in the second quarter after he shoved Greg Kite to the floor when battling for inside position. Orlando Woolridge compensated for Williams' absence with 30 points. Mike Gminski paced the rebounding with 10 as the Nets outrebounded the Celtics, feeling Parish's absence. Boston pulled down 34 caroms. Boston held a 55-51 lead at the half, but after the intermission, New Jersey ran off a key 11-4 spurt sparked by Woolridge and rookie Pearl Washington. Later in the period, the Nets had opened up a 72-63 margin. Boston had to battle to stay in the game from there.

Boston rallied late in the game, but their thrust consisted of Danny Ainge's 3-point bombing late, rather than any consistent set offense. The Nets sent three men off at Kevin McHale, which did open up the outside for Ainge, who scored 2 straight 3-point FGs to pare the lead to 100-98. But the Nets pulled the lead back out again as unlikely contributors Ray Williams and Ben Coleman gave the Nets a lift down the stretch. The Celtics lost their eighth road game in their last nine contests.

Larry Bird added 26 and Kevin McHale had 19 for Boston. McHale had 10 rebounds for the C's and Dennis Johnson led with 7 assists.

Celtics, 103 — Washington, 86 at Boston Garden

WASHINGTON												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
Jones	29	2-6	0-0	6-8	1	5	4					
J. Vincent	39	5-14	5-6	0-4	6	2	15					
M. Malone	40	7-11	0-2	2-7	2	2	14					
Whalley	29	5-10	2-4	0-2	5	4	12					
J. Malone	36	11-23	3-4	3-7	3	2	25					
Cook	12	1-6	0-0	0-0	2	1	2					
Adams	19	1-5	0-0	0-1	3	0	2					
Bol	21	2-2	2-3	0-5	1	3	6					
Williams	15	2-5	2-2	0-0	1	3	6					
TOTALS	240	36-84	14-21	11-34	24	22	86					

Percentages: FG—42.9, FT—66.7, 3-PT FGs—0.00 (J. Vincent 0-1, Adams 0-2). Rebounds: 9 Team. Blocked shots: 7 (Jones 3, M. Malone, Bol, Whalley, Williams). Turnovers: 12 (J. Vincent 3, M. Malone 3, Whalley 2, J. Malone, Jones, Cook, Williams). Steals: 10 (Cook 5, Vincent 3, Whalley 2).

BOSTON												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
Roberts	25	4-6	2-2	0-4	0	1	10					
Bird	44	11-20	8-8	2-17	15	1	30					
Parish	37	8-13	2-2	1-7	0	4	18					
Sichting	28	7-10	0-0	0-0	6	2	14					
Ainge	45	4-10	0-1	1-5	8	3	8					
Kite	11	0-2	0-2	0-3	0	2	0					
D. Johnson	21	4-7	0-0	0-1	2	4	8					
Daye	26	4-5	1-2	3-7	3	4	9					
S. Vincent	2	1-1	0-0	0-1	0	2	2					
Henry	1	2-2	0-0	0-0	0	0	4					
TOTALS	240	45-76	18-17	7-44	35	21	103					

Percentages: FG—59.2, FT—76.5, 3-PT FGs—0.00 (Ainge 0-1, Vincent 0-1, Bird 0-3). Rebounds: 3 Team. Blocked shots: 4 (Bird 3, Parish). Turnovers: 18 (Bird 4, Parish 4, Kite 3, Ainge 2, Johnson 2, Daye 2, Roberts). Steals: 7 (Kite 2, Daye 2, Roberts, Bird, Ainge).

WASHINGTON												
Washington	27	25	17	17	86							
Boston	30	23	26	24	103							

Technical fouls: None. A: 14,890. T: 1:49. Officials: Rush, Nunez.

Celtics, 119 — Detroit, 115 at Boston Garden

DETROIT												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
Nimphus	24	2-9	1-1	1-3	1	1	5					
Dantley	40	9-12	2-2	1-1	4	2	20					
Laimbeer	42	4-12	10-10	2-12	1	5	19					
Thomas	34	9-18	7-7	2-4	8	6	25					
V. Johnson	45	7-21	4-6	2-4	7	1	18					
Salley	10	3-3	0-0	0-1	0	3	6					
Dumars	17	6-8	0-0	0-0	1	3	12					
Mahorn	29	2-6	0-0	2-12	4	4	4					
Rodman	23	3-4	0-0	3-3	0	4	6					
Green	1	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	0	0					
TOTALS	265	45-90	24-26	13-41	23	29	115					

Percentages: FG—50.0, FT—92.3, 3-PT FGs—20.0 (Laimbeer 1-4, V. Johnson 0-1). Rebounds: 9 Team. Blocked shots: 5 (Laimbeer 2, Salley, Mahorn, Nimphus). Turnovers: 14 (Thomas 3, Mahorn 3, Rodman 3, Nimphus 2, Dantley 2, Laimbeer). Steals: 6 (Thomas 2, V. Johnson 2, Laimbeer, Mahorn).

BOSTON												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
McHale	44	6-12	13-15	2-10	4	1	25					
Bird	33	13-21	4-4	0-3	8	6	31					
Parish	45	7-14	1-2	1-6	0	3	15					
Johnson	42	10-17	4-5	0-2	6	3	24					
Sichting	34	5-7	0-0	0-2	3	5	10					
Roberts	9	0-0	2-2	0-1	0	2	2					
Ainge	32	3-5	2-3	0-3	8	3	9					
Kite	6	1-3	0-0	3-3	0	1	2					
Daye	20	0-3	1-2	1-2	2	1	1					
TOTALS	265	45-92	27-33	7-32	31	25	119					

Percentages: FG—54.9, FT—81.8, 3-PT FGs—4.00 (Ainge 1-1, Bird 1-2, Johnson 0-1, Sichting 0-1). Rebounds: 9 Team. Blocked shots: 7 (McHale 3, Parish 3, Bird). Turnovers: 13 (McHale 4, Johnson 4, Bird 2, Parish 2, Sichting). Steals: 1 (Ainge).

DETROIT												
Detroit	33	29	31	18	4	115						
Boston	20	34	26	31	8	119						

Technical fouls: Boston (illegal defense, 6:53 3rd; Ainge, 4:32 3rd; Detroit (illegal defense, 3:42 2nd, 10:59 3rd, 3:27 4th). A: 14,890. T: 2:29. Officials: Jack Madden, Ed Middleton.

Celtics, 104 — Philadelphia, 106 at Philadelphia

BOSTON												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
McHale	47	12-19	5-5	3-6	2	5	29					
Bird	48	16-32	5-5	5-10	12	4	39					
Parish	39	4-13	1-1	0-8	1	3	9					
Johnson	37	2-9	0-0	1-1	11	3	4					
Sichting	35	4-8	0-0	1-2	2	1	8					
Kite	10	1-1	1-1	0-2	0	2	3					
Vincent	15	1-5	4-4	1-2	1	3	6					
Daye	14	1-3	0-2	0-1	1	1	2					
Henry	18	2-6	0-0	1-2	1	2	4					
Roberts	2	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
TOTALS	285	43-97	16-18	11-34	31	24	104					

Percentages: FG—44.3, FT—88.9, 3-PT FGs—25.0 (Bird 2-3, McHale 0-1, Johnson 0-2, Henry 0-1). Rebounds: 11 Team. Blocked shots: 4 (Parish 2, Daye, McHale). Turnovers: 16 (Bird 7, Parish 3, Sichting 3, McHale, Vincent, Henry). Steals: 7 (Johnson 2, Sichting 2, McHale, Bird, Vincent).

PHILADELPHIA												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
Hinson	23	0-2	5-6	0-5	0	4	29					
Barkley	47	11-17	6-10	7-18	6	5	39					
McCormick	43	4-6	2-2	2-9	2	3	9					
Erving	23	5-10	1-1	1-5	5	4	4					
Colter	44	3-9	0-0	0-3	4	2	8					
Robinson	38	11-19	0-0	1-4	1	3	23					
Wingate	22	2-5	4-4	0-2	2	2	6					
Toney	25	3-8	9-10	1-1	5	0	2					
TOTALS	265	39-76	27-33	12-47	25	23	106					

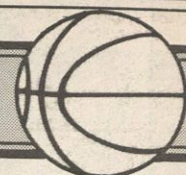
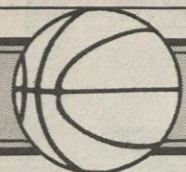
Percentages: FG—51.3, FT—81.8, 3-PT FGs—0.05 (Toney 1-1, Wingate 0-1). Rebounds: 9 Team. Blocked shots: 3 (Barkley 4, Robinson 2, Hinson 2, McCormick). Turnovers: 22 (Barkley 4, Robinson 4, Wingate 4, Toney 3, McCormick 3, Hinson, Erving, Colter, team). Steals: 8 (Barkley 3, Robinson 3, Colter 2).

BOSTON												
Boston	24	33	23	195	104							
Phila.	33	29	19	187	106							

Technical fouls: Boston (illegal defense, 8:39 4th); Philadelphia (coach Guokas, 3:28 3rd). A: 17,967. T: 2:36. Officials: Garretson, Alexander.

Cleveland, 107 — Celtics, 83 at Richfield Coliseum

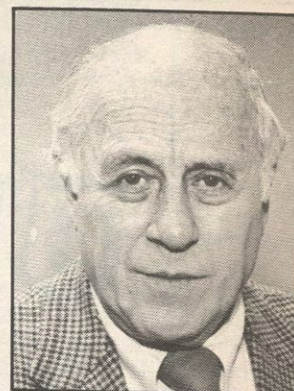
at Richfield Coliseum							
BOSTON							
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	
		M-A	M-A	O-T			
Bird	41	11-21	4-4	2-12	7	1	
McHale	40	10-19	3-3	2-11	1	5	
Roberts	24	2-5	0-0	1-4	1	1	
Johnson	33	3-10	1-2	1-2	4	3	
Ainge	34	4-6	0-0	0-0	4	2	
Sichting	13	2-5	0-0	0-1	0	1	
Kite	20	0-2	1-2	0-2	1	2	
Daye	19	2-4	0-0	0-2	1	5	
Henry	8	0-4	0-2	0-3	0	1	
Vincent	8	3-4	0-0	0-0	1	0	



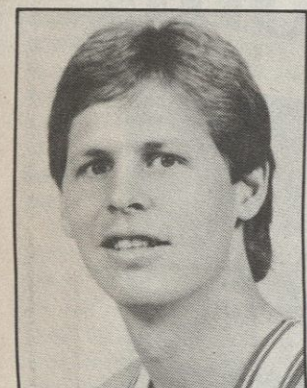
Billy Cunningham

Billy Cunningham, former 76er Coach and now CBS commentator, described Larry Bird in close games: "He wants the ball in his hands, and he's fearless. If you're the coach, that's where you want the ball. The intangible asset he brings to that situation is his leadership."

Red Auerbach on the Celtics discipline: "We like our players to play for fun and be happy rather than afraid. It's like any business. If you have employees who work through fear, you're never going to get any ingenuity out of them. You're never going to get any employees who will take a gamble to come up with ideas. All you'll have are robots that are going to do their jobs, have a low-key approach, stay out of trouble. They'll put in the hours and go home. But I'd rather have it the other way. So we talk to people. We don't fine them indiscriminately. A lot of teams have rules that say if you're late or miss a plane, you get fined. We have rules, but we temper them with mercy."



Red Auerbach



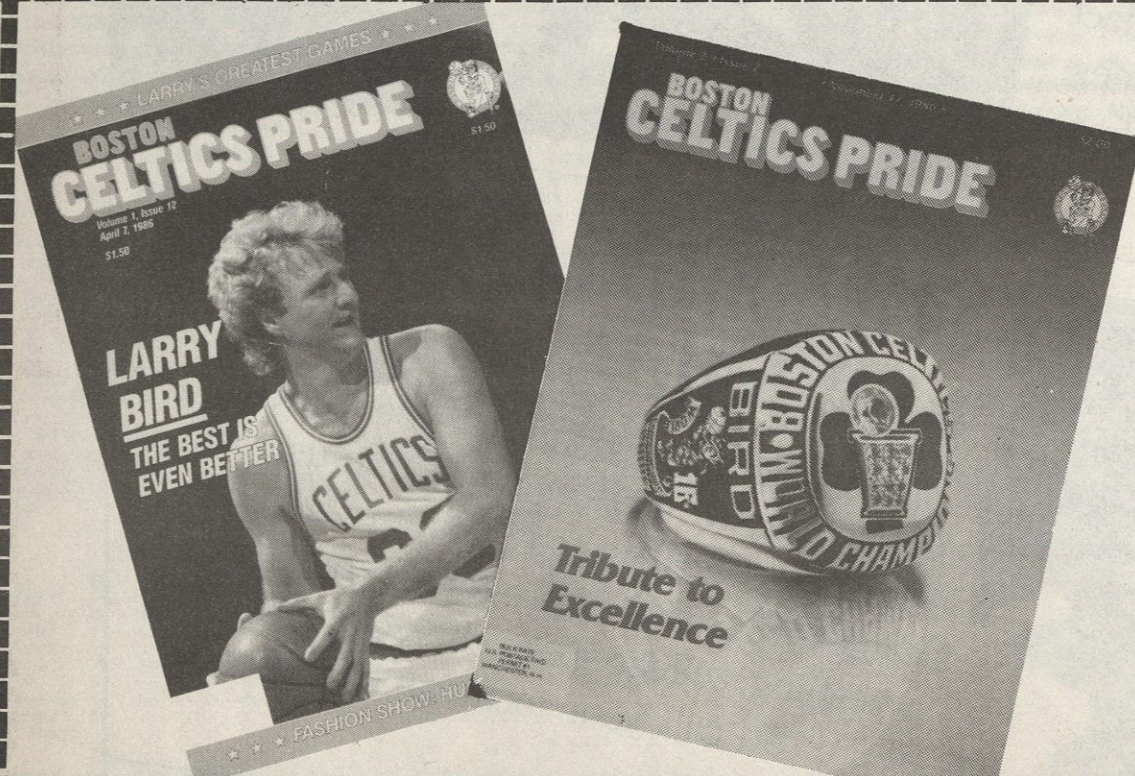
Danny Ainge

Danny Ainge, former baseball player for the Toronto Blue Jays, compares the crowds in baseball to the home crowds in basketball. In his opinion playing on the road in basketball is extremely difficult: "Baseball crowds are more laid back. The crowds aren't constantly yelling. They'll yell when something is happening, when a team gets a couple of hits and starts a big rally. Basketball just has constant intensity throughout the game. The crowd can help the home team get the edge, give it a little more energy."

Dave Cowens, former Celtic great, describes retiring superstar, Julius Erving: "What I'll remember about Julius, besides his dedication, will be his hands. They gave him the advantage that made him a superstar because they allowed him to float, to get away from people and still take great shots. They gave him a dimension most players don't have. Without those hands, he'd have gotten hammered a lot more; he'd have had to play more of a power game."



Dave Cowens



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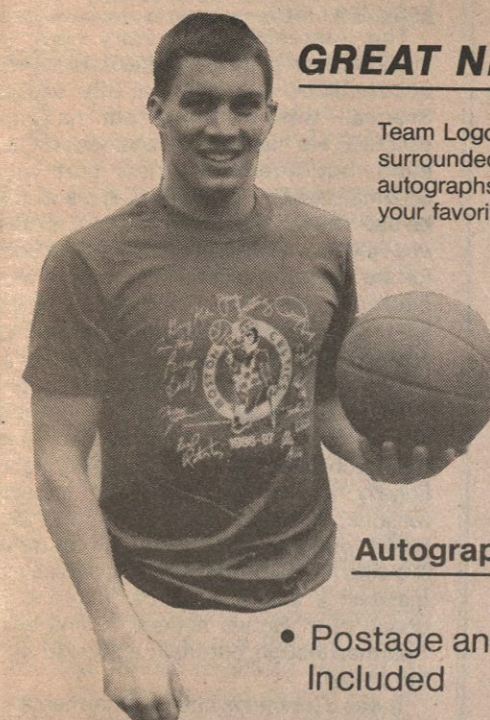
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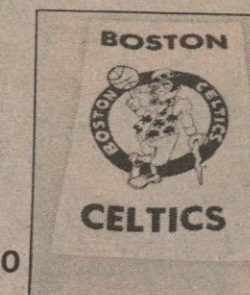
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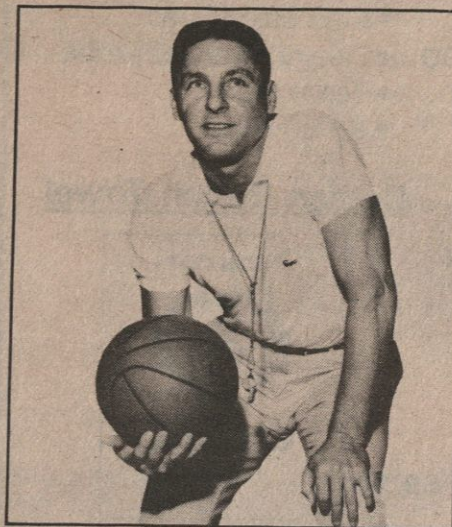
Celtics Classics

When Red Auerbach is pressed to list players who have specific talents, such as shooting, he usually prefaces his comments that: "the game remains the same, namely, the object of the game is to shoot the ball into the basket and any complexities designed to distract the player, fan, or coach from that understanding is a deterrance." His catalogue of outstanding shooters in his most recent volume (*Red Auerbach: On and Off the Court* with Joe Fitzgerald) includes set shooters and jump shooters; it begins with Bill Sharman, the 6-1 off-guard during the initial seasons of the Dynasty years.

(For the record, the entire list of "great pure shooters" reads Sharman, Sam Jones, Rick Barry, Austin Carr, Oscar Robertson, with "about 20 others," but who were categorized differently, because their form was irregular: for example Tommy Heinsohn, Frank Ramsey, Bob Feerick, Fred Scolari).

Bill Sharman was as widely known for his superior athletic ability as he was for his outstanding talents on the basketball court. In fact, Bill Sharman is the athletic forerunner to the Celtics superb back-court player, Danny Ainge. Like Ainge,

Acquiring Bill Sharman



Sharman: L.A. Dodger Turned Celtic.

Sharman was a record-breaking collegiate player in basketball. Also comparable to Danny, Bill began his professional sports

career in baseball. Finally, the two men followed like paths to success: once the commitment was made to basketball the individual achievement and the Celtics championship were fashioned.

Bill Sharman matriculated at the University of Southern California playing under Sam Barry. The latter, according to Neil Issacs in *All the Moves*, was a believer in a guard-oriented offense, learned under Doc Meanwell at Wisconsin. Meanwell was one of the founders of ball-control offense in the first third of the century. Under Barry, Sharman broke Hank Luisetti's Pacific Coast Conference scoring record, but as he said in George Sullivan's *Picture History of the Celtics*, his original ambition was to play baseball. He signed a contract for a \$10,000 bonus with the Brooklyn Dodgers, one of major league baseball's powerhouses in the forties and fifties (the Dodgers would win two World Series in five years under the guidance of Branch Rickey, who developed one of the best minor league systems in the sport). Sharman was caught in a numbers game, a competitive web. He was playing the outfield behind stars such as Duke Snider, Carl Furillo, and Andy Pafko. His prospects for advancement to the Dodgers appeared bleak, even when the Dodgers were edged out of the National League pennant in a 1951 playoff by the New York Giants. Bobby Thomson hit the home run "heard 'round the world." Sharman was on the Dodgers bench that day, watching the exciting conclusion, wondering if he would ever be able to get his shot.

Sharman's basketball career was literally in the future. He had been drafted by the Fort Wayne Pistons in a dispersal draft but decided to leave his basketball career on hold while chancing baseball. But Auerbach (historically he specializes in this modus operandi) acquired the rights to the Dodgers outfielder when one of his original preferred draft choices, Center Chuck Share, informed Fred Zollner, owner of the Pistons, that he, Share, wanted to play in Fort Wayne. Share had been a standout Center at Bowling Green in the neighboring state of Ohio. Share was the player Auerbach had selected in lieu of Holy Cross hero, Bob Cousy. Auerbach had encountered biting criticism for taking Share and he was determined to barter hard with Zollner for Share's rights. The results: Share for Bob Brannum, the rights to Sharman, and \$10,000. When Sharman began wavering in the fall of 1951, Red made his move, hoping to attract the talented USC player.

He asked Bones McKinney, (*Celtics Pride*, March 2) to talk to Sharman and a workout was arranged in the Boston Garden. At court-side, Auerbach sat in the Garden and was immediately attracted to the player; he at that time had had Bob Cousy for a season and could recognize the possibilities inherent in that outstanding playmaker. Sharman's athletic background was impressive to Auerbach; besides the physical skill, the USC player was demonstrating offensive touch. Under Barry's coaching, Auerbach knew

the player had been well-schooled and knew the game.

The interesting side story here, is that Auerbach persuaded Walter Brown to quickly tender a substantial offer to Bill. Sharman was wavering, but he was essential. He had still had baseball on his mind, but Auerbach knew that with Sharman beside Cousy, the Celtics would be set in the backcourt for years. The offer of \$14,000 was an astounding figure both for the league and for the Celtics; it was made to a player who had been out of the sport for a season. And yet, it seemed to make sense; Auerbach had cut corners in obtaining players like McKinney, brought in late in his career. He had negotiated a terrific deal with Zollner. Brown and Auerbach switched business roles; traditionally, Brown was prone to exceed reasonable limits in satisfying his beloved players and Red was usually drawing the purse strings tight, partially to maintain a salary structure in order to coach pros. Brown hedged at first with Sharman though, but finally agreed to sign the player.

It was a fortuitous choice. Sharman and Cousy were perfect complementary players; Bill could catch the intricate passes of the master, Cousy. He was a great spot shooter, and says Johnny Most, an excellent defensive player, too. His discipline and determination are near legendary, but nevertheless have been successfully utilized. As a player, Sharman followed a self-constructed personal routine that included specific times for sleep, for dinner on game days, and extended this to his game. He would write down the fundamentals of free throw shooting, for example and he would refer to this index periodically before taking the floor. The result: four-time all-star 1st team, four NBA championships as a player, member of the 25th Anniversary All-Star Team, and a member of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame, elected in 1974.

As in the beginning, there is interest and intrigue connected to the end of Bill Sharman's updated story in the NBA. As Sharman's career was drawing to a close in Boston, he had hoped to either play longer minutes (at age 35) or move on to a coaching job. There was a period bordering on strife when Auerbach wouldn't release him easily without compensation. Sharman instead began his coaching career in the old American Basketball League in Los Angeles. Even after the team moved to Cleveland, Sharman nevertheless won a championship in his first year as coach. His discipline and attention to detail made him one of the finest floor mentors ever. He guided the Golden State Warriors to an upset championship of the Western Conference in 1967 and coached one of the sport's finest teams ever, the 1971-72 Los Angeles Lakers to the NBA title, a Celtics-styled fast-breaking blur of Gold. He moved upstairs to general Manager and now is President of the Lakers, after losing his voice during a period of personal tragedy. In the mid-seventies, the death of his beloved wife. Now, he has helped construct one of the best front offices in the league with the Lakers: it competes fiercely with the Celtics for league supremacy into the immediate present.

Thanks for the Memories

K.C. Took the Time

There are two distinct memories I'd like to share with the readers, the first was finding out what a nice and sociable man K.C. Jones is.

One afternoon while walking through the Nashua mall I saw a small sign. K.C. Jones will be here Thursday night signing autographs from 7:30-9:00. I was so excited! I have considered myself as the biggest Celtics fan ever and this would fulfill one of my biggest dreams, to see the coach of the World Champion Celtics!! That night I called three of my friends and asked them if they wanted to go too. They of course accepted. We got there very early so we could be first in the line and we just about were. Being so close to the coach of the World Champion Celtics gave me shivers up and down my spine. They were only letting one person go at a time but with us they made an exception and let us all go together. I expected him to just sign our book and then we would leave but instead he talked with us for about 10 minutes and signed all our books. It made me feel so good about the whole Celtic organization that a man in his position would take that kind of time for us "little people."

My second memory was also quite exciting and special.

Being a girl, people think my love for the game of basketball is a bit odd. When friends or relatives walk into my room they say it is like walking into the "Basketball

Hall of Fame" because of the wall-to-wall-to-ceiling posters I have of all the basketball greats. Half of my room is of my favorite, Danny Ainge. From posters to clippings of his best games I have it all, even baseball cards from when he was with the Toronto Blue Jays.

After following the Celtics for many years finally it came, my fondest memory of the Celtics and of my life. It happened on Celtics Pride Day after they won "sweet 16." I was absolutely ecstatic when they won and wished that I could be there to celebrate with them. When I heard about the parade and assembly that would be held at City Hall the next day I decided I had to go. Living two hours away from Boston, my parents and friends said it would be impossible to go. But my two friends and I were determined to get there some way and we begged and pleaded with everyone to bring us to Boston. That night I was very depressed because it was 9:30 and still we had no ride. But then the phone rang, it was my friend saying she had found us a ride and to be ready by 6:30 the next morning. I don't think I slept at all that night and I was ready at 6:00 that morning to go.

We arrived in Boston at about 9:00 and bought many souvenirs and made our way down the streets to City Hall. We were in the front row and waited for three hours. This seemed like such a short time to wait because I had already been waiting for years. This would be the closest I would come to my idols, The World Champion Celtics.

Even now almost a year later I have such a clear picture of everyone stepping out to wave and the sweet words that sounded like music to my ears coming across over the loud speakers as they stood only a few feet from me. Though there were thousands of people I felt like they were just talking to me and like I was so close to them because that was the closest I have ever gotten to any of them.

I will continue to follow and idolize these great players but this will always remain the best moment in my entire life. (Unless you could arrange a personal meeting of course!!!!)

THANK YOU SO MUCH CELTICS!!!
A Devoted Fan
Ann Courmoyer

Three S. Dakota Fans

A dream came true for three South Dakota ladies who have been Celtic fans for many years. Having wanted to see a Celtic game in person for a long time, on the spur of the moment, we drove 620 miles to Denver, Colorado on February 10, 1987, to have our dream come true. Our main goal was to hopefully get Larry Bird's autograph.

After arriving at our hotel, we discovered to our delight, that the Celtics were also staying there. With hearts beating with

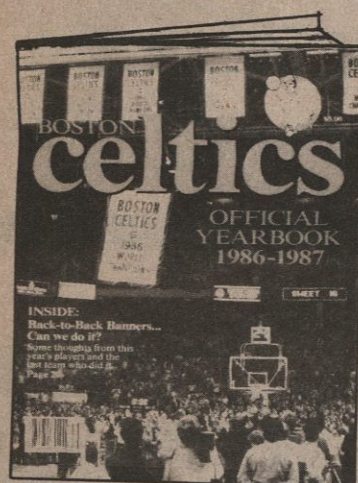
excitement, we rushed to purchase a Celtic banner, in hopes of just getting a few of their autographs. Fortunately, they were arriving at different times after the All-Star break. We patiently waited 6 hours in the lobby of the hotel and it was well worth every moment. As we met each one of them, plus K.C. Jones, shook their hands and received their autographs. It was unbelievable to us that some of the best basketball players in the world were so friendly, polite and patient with us, and they gave us one of the biggest thrills of our life.

After attending the basketball game, unknown to us, the biggest thrill was yet to come. While sitting in the lounge of the hotel, none other than the greatest basketball player in the world, in our eyes, Larry Bird, joined us. And we spent two hours visiting with him. WHAT A GUY!!! This was the absolute highlight of our trip. We will cherish the memories forever.

Thanks to Larry Bird we were introduced to the *Celtics Pride* paper, which we thoroughly enjoy reading. Boston can be very proud of their Celtics, as they are a class act off the court as well as on the court.

Good Luck, Celtics as we are cheering for you in Mobridge, South Dakota. Our dream some day soon is to see a game in the Boston Garden. THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES.

Bonnie Brown
Lenora Goehring
Donna Rossow



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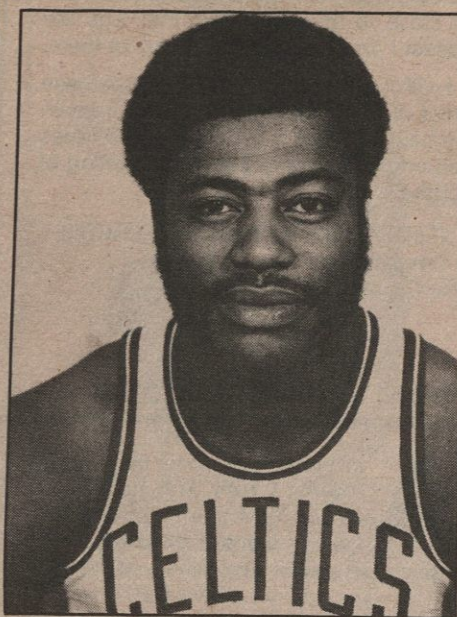
Like so many classic role players through the seasons, Jim Ard began his career in unassuming fashion yet still had the perseverance and proper team attitude to deliver when the Celtics needed him most. Ard was a Center—6-foot-8 and smallish even during the middle seventies, when the man he played behind, Dave Cowens made the position suitable for this size performer.

Ard was an articulate man with a generous spirit, as well as a talented enough player to be drafted in the first round by the Seattle SuperSonics in 1970. This ironically was the draft which landed for the Celtics the services of Cowens. Although Ard was a potential NBA player, he ended up in the American Basketball Association. Some of Ard's teammates included Bill Melchionni the league's leading playmaker as well as Rick Barry, who was traded to the Nets in time for the 1970-71 season.

"The league was looking for a credible name in New York," observed Ard. Barry made basketball history by jumping to the NBA after two outstanding seasons with the Golden State Warriors through 1967. "By jumping to the new league as the (NBA's) leading scorer, he gave the ABA a chance to survive."

Ard's NBA career began with the

Jim Ard Always Accepted the Challenge Filling the Gap



Jim Ard: Strong, Intelligent, Proud.

Sonics and 76ers briefly during the latter stages of the 1974 season before he was released by the Sixers in August of 1974. The Celtics were the defending league champs at that time and were looking for a replacement as backup center to Hank Finkel, a veteran who would play his last season in 1974-75.

His contribution appropriately increased after Finkel left the team. In 1975-76, Ard averaged 3.8 ppg and 3.0 rebounds; it was a championship year in Boston, albeit a difficult season on the floor and off. Ard's mental makeup was as much a factor in Boston's winning that season as his floor play.

He was a marketing major from the University of Cincinnati who parlayed a career of limited basketball skills with an American Basketball Association bonus, a love for the game, and an ability to communicate with people. Ard was extremely strong inside, able to cope with pressure. This quality was as bright as the spotlight which suddenly glowed directly

on him during one of the most famous games in the franchise's history, the triple overtime classic against Phoenix in 1976. With Cowens and Paul Silas fouled out, Ard came in and starred for the team down the stretch. In the 3rd OT, Ard clinched the game with two free throws. Overall, he played 16 minutes in that game, scored 8 points and had a rebound and an assist. A typical consistently needed bit part contribution necessary for champions.

Today Jim Ard is a Sales Agent in Computer Software for Amdahl Corporation in the Elizabeth, New Jersey area. He retains his ability to relate to people and his athletic class. "I prepared for life after basketball in school and throughout the later years in pro ball," he remembered.

Like most players who had limited ability but yet were able to compete in the professional game, Ard's ability to play successfully varied precisely with the team's success on the floor. In 1976-77, with the arrival of Julius Erving in Philadelphia from the ABA, the Celtics' dominance of the league declined. Ard's contributions remained steady but John Havlicek had slowed imperceptibly; Cowens had been overworked and finally had been forced to ask for some time away from the game. And despite some strong games from the backup center and courageous efforts from Jo Jo White and Charley Scott in the backcourt, the Celtics were dethroned by the 76ers (after Cowens had returned to the team in January of that season). The following year, Ard found himself battling for his basketball life. The team had drafted Cedric Maxwell, a blue-chipper from North Carolina-Charlotte and holdovers Sidney Wicks and Curtis Rowe, (while playing woefully below their potential, nevertheless had more potential), as players as well as contracts which were albatrosses to the team. Ard was cut by the team in November of 1977-78 after surviving the team's training camp; Wicks ended a pre-season holdout and this cost Ard his position.

As the team headed to Hartford for a late October early season game (the proud Celtics still winless that season, headed for a year of disaster after seasons of being the best), Ard sat on a bus and talked about his years with the Celtics. "We were always a close-knit bunch he recalled then, "but something went out of the team after we couldn't pull things together last (1976-77) season."

"I always tried to do my best out there, and do whatever was asked of me by Red and Tommy Heinsohn (then Coach), but time goes on and you have to be prepared for the future. I always want them to know that Jim Ard did his best for the team."

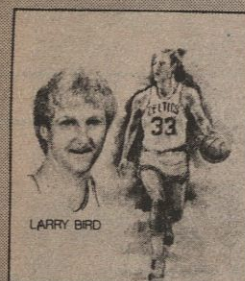
He was talking in past tense at that time, while still a member of the team. Emotional, he still was practical.

"You have to be," he said. Ard had graduated Cincinnati eighteen credits short of his degree but has gone on as a success in the Northeast.

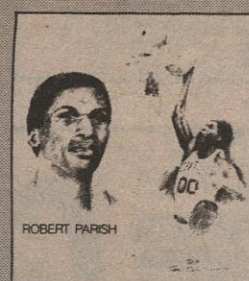
"I think you always feel part of the team, even after the playing days have finished," he said. "The Celtics and their sense of cohesion and industry were rewarding then, and were rewarding when you had to face the challenges of life after being through with the game."



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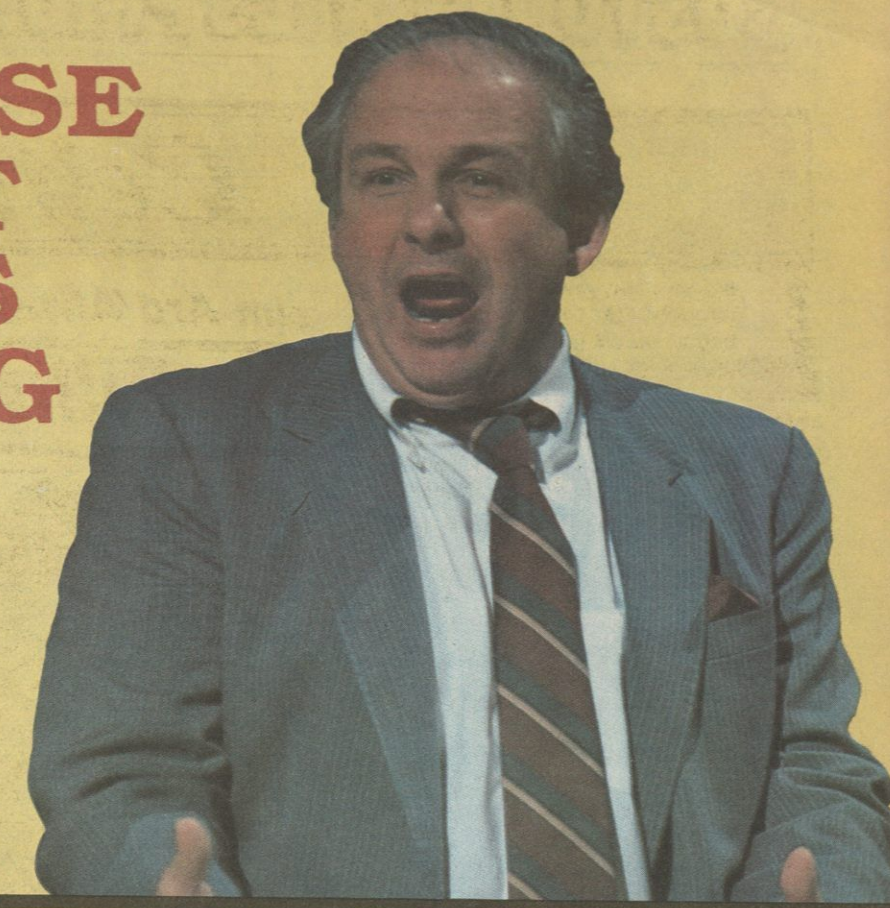
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